

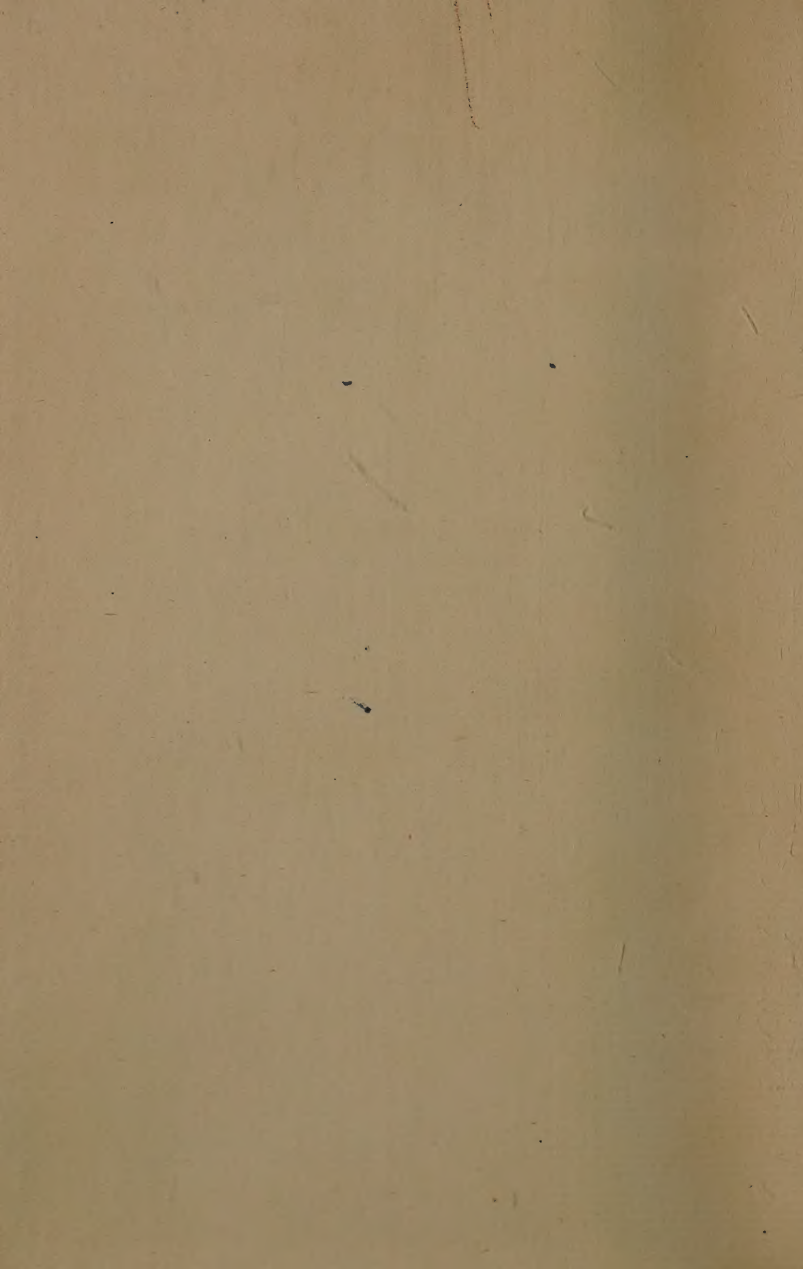
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HINDUISM

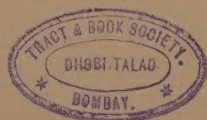
AND

CHRISTIANITY

BY THE
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FORMERLY OF AJMER
AUTHOR OF
"THE HOLY GHOST THE PARACLETE"
ETC, ETC.

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PREFACE

“NOT only does Hinduism contain a subtle philosophy, express high moral truths and enjoin many social virtues; it even in one guise or other embodies many of the leading religious truths which Christianity teaches. But that there is in it an ineradicable vice which neutralises all that is good, which has paralysed, and which must paralyse, all those efforts at reform within Hinduism that more enlightened Hindus have made and are now making, and which leaves Christianity the only hope for India—is what I have endeavoured to show.”

This extract from the preface to the first edition of this book indicates its purpose. When that edition was published, thirty years ago, the difficulty was rather to convince people at home that in Hinduism there was a real yearning after God, and an embodiment of many of the truths which are at the basis of all religions. The difficulty now is rather to convince them that Hinduism is utterly inadequate as a response to that yearning; that the truths it contains are so poisoned with error as to make them powerless for the highest good; that Christianity is still the only hope for the regeneration of India. But all investigation has made

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this more evident: the more thorough and the more sympathetic the study of Hinduism, the more evident becomes the conclusion that all that is true in it finds its fulfilment only in Christianity.

Since this book was written, many others have been published on Hinduism, some dealing with the whole field, others with particular phases or localities. It seemed to me at one time that it might be as well to leave the field to fresh writers; but as missionaries in India have assured me that it still supplies a want which no other book has sought to supply, the second edition being exhausted, I have prepared the new edition—rewriting the greater part, and seeking to give it more the character of an introduction to the study of the religions of India. It would have been an easy and a fascinating task to enlarge it, and to give full details of the different sects of Hinduism, of its chief festivals and many forms of worship; but this would have been to alter the purpose of the book, to make it an attempt to supersede writers who have occupied these fields, instead of making it an introduction to them. I have therefore sought to curtail rather than to expand, to avoid what is merely of passing interest, and to give only such details as may be necessary for a clear understanding of the main features of Hinduism, and of the principles which underlie its cult and ethics. Until these be grasped, the resistance which Hinduism opposes to Christianity cannot be understood; when once they are grasped, the

significance of each detail observed by workers in the field, or related in books on the subject, becomes more easily apparent.

It has been a sufficient reward to me, for any efforts that this little work has cost me, to have received testimonies from many in the field that it has been helpful to them, putting them in a position for understanding the character of the task before them, and for observing the religion with which they had to contend, that would otherwise have required a long experience to attain. Thanking God for the service which it has thus rendered, and praying that by His grace it may yet be serviceable to workers in India and to students of missions at home, it is now offered them in this new edition.

P.S.—Just when this edition had passed through the press, I received from India a brochure, entitled the “Yogi (or Jogi) and his Message,” by Swami Dharmananda Mahavarati. He occupies a position quite different from the founder of the Brahma Samaj or the Arya Samaj. His tributes to Christ and the Bible are as eloquent as those of Keshub Chunder Sen; his adherence to Hinduism as complete as that of Dayanandi Saraswati. He looks on Christ and His religion as the fulfilment of what is best in Hinduism. He is himself a Yogi, and he looks on Christ as the greatest of the Yogis. Some of the statements on which he grounds this, both with regard to the unrecorded years of Christ’s life and the attainments of the Yoga system, require, to say the least, verification. He hardly realises, too,

what must be the consequence of putting new wine into old bottles. But there is a high moral earnestness and sincerity about all he writes; and he seems one of whom Christ would say, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Nothing better could be desired for India than that his countrymen should follow his advice, and study earnestly Christ as He is presented in the Bible. If they do so, we may trust that the Holy Spirit will bring them into the full knowledge of the truth.

NOTE AS TO THE PRONUNCIATION OF HINDU WORDS

Ch as in Church.
g " " get.
j " " jar.
ph " " up-hill.
th " " boat-house.
ā as *u* in but.

ā as *a* in bar.
e as in they.
ī as *ee* in feet.
ī as *ee* in see.
ū as in put.
ū as in rule.

J and *y* are interchangeable in many words, as *jogi* or *yogi*; *jati* or *yati*. The short *ā* has much the same force as *e* mute in French. It is, as a rule, inaudible at the end of a word. Thus *Veda* is pronounced *Ved*; *Mantra*, *Mantr*; *Rāma*, *Rām*; *Krishna*, *Krishn*.

In this book the diacritical marks are generally given only the first time a word is introduced.

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INTRODUCTION

INDIA has been compared with Europe for its extent, its population, and the variety of kingdoms, races, and languages within its bounds. It might be more appropriately compared with Christendom. This word makes us feel that, however distinct may be the races and nations within its pale, they have one common bond in accepting more or less purely Christianity as their faith. So, too, the various races of India have a common bond in accepting Hinduism as their faith. Many of the aboriginal tribes still retain their primitive worship, as some of the tribes of Europe retained the heathen worship till the fifteenth century. Mohammedanism numbers its votaries by tens of millions, but it is an exotic in India as in Europe. Hinduism is the religion of the Hindus, and must be understood by those who would understand the problem that faces the Church of Christ, in its efforts to win them to faith in Him.

Hinduism presents greater contrasts than any other religion, and at the same time is held together by a bond that makes it the most adhesive of all religions. To some it seems "of all superstitions the most irrational, of all superstitions the

most inelegant . . . of all superstitions the most immoral.”¹ To others it seems “a calm, clear, collected exposition of principles, which Germany constantly and England occasionally gropes after, without ever grasping them with any such grasp as that with which India has taken hold of them.”² Both of these views are true according to the standpoint. The Hindu philosopher lives in a world of thought such as the European has little conception of. The practical questions that are generally present to the mind of the latter, leading him to tread with doubt, if not with humility, never trouble the Hindu metaphysician. He moves in the region of pure thought, unimpeded by the contradictions which retard the course of his Western brethren, on to the goal of a transcendental idealism from which the most daring of them would shrink.

At the same time the popular worship of Hinduism includes puerilities, cruelties, and abominations, such as the lowest and most savage of heathen superstitions have never exceeded. It may be said that it is as unfair to judge of Hinduism by these as to judge of Christianity by the degraded superstitions of some parts of Italy and Spain. But no believer in a pure Christianity would think of allowing that these superstitions have any warrant in Christianity; while the Hindu philosopher quite consciously supplies the warrant for the grossest idolatry; and the vilest Hindu

¹ Macaulay, *Speech on the Gates of Somnauth*.

² Ballantyne, *Bible for the Pundits*.

idolater almost instinctively vindicates his idolatry by the canons of the philosopher. It is this union of subtle pantheistic philosophy with gross popular idolatry that constitutes modern Hinduism, and makes it the most redoubtable opponent that Christianity has to encounter in India, if not in the world.

Such a system seems wholly opposed to our conception of religion, and to afford no point of contact with Christianity. But if we look behind the surface we shall find that what is most false is just a perversion of what is most true, and is the witness to a want in the soul of man which Christianity alone can satisfy. Still more will this be evident if we study the process through which such a religion has been developed. If we trace Hinduism back to its earliest records, we find a state of religious thought not so very different from that presented in the earliest records of Israel, and we shall see that the vast differences that now exist between them are due to the influences under which they were developed., rather than to any antagonism in their origins. The materials to enable us to trace this development in Hinduism are more abundant than definite; yet the general outlines of the movements of religious thought in India in the past may be traced with sufficient clearness to enable us better to understand its present position.

HINDUISM AND CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER I

THE MANTRAS

THE earliest records we have of the Hindu religion, as of the Hindu race, are contained in certain old collections of hymns. The hymns are called **Mantras**; the books in which they are collected are called **Vedas**. As the hymns must have existed before the collections were made, we shall give them a short study before looking at the form in which they were cast.

The oldest of these hymns date from certainly not less than twelve hundred years before Christ. They are valuable not only for the light they cast on the early history of India, but also for the light they cast on the early history of mankind, especially of that section to which English and Hindus and most of the nations between belong, called from the word used in these hymns, the **Āryan** race. Where the original home of the **Āryas**¹ was, whether Eastern Europe or Central Asia, cannot

¹ Arya is the exact transliteration of the Sanskrit word. I use it as the noun and Aryan as the adjective.

be determined with any certainty; but by the time these hymns were composed the Hindu branch had advanced as far as the Panjab and the banks of the Indus. They had but recently emigrated from a colder clime; for they reckon their age by the number of their winters, and they still retain the fair complexion of their northern source. Their wealth seems to have consisted mostly in flocks and herds, but many were agriculturalists, and many dwelt in cities and practised arts and handicrafts. Priests, warriors, and merchants were found among them, but merely as professions, not as castes in the modern Hindu sense. Neither had they any special rules about food: they even ate the flesh of the cow—now the unpardonable sin of Hinduism,—and praised it as the best of viands. We can find among them scarce any trace of the manners and customs of the modern Hindus.

Besides these Aryas, there are also **Dasyus** spoken of in these hymns. Of them we learn little but that they were dark in complexion, constantly at war with the Aryas, and had made some progress in civilisation. The word means natives or nations. They were inhabitants of India when the Aryas entered it, and bore much the same relation to them as the Canaanites did to the Israelites. Thus the first glimpse we get of India, more than three thousand years ago, reveals the ancestors of the Brahmans, Rajputs, and other high castes, living, a fair complexioned race, in the north-west corner of the peninsula; and all the rest occupied by a darker, more savage race, called

by the Arya conquerors then, as the Hindus are called by the English conquerors now, Dasyu—natives.

On turning to the **religious beliefs** expressed in these hymns, we find a religion already well developed, with regard to the origin of which we can form only conjectures. The names of the gods, taken along with the hymns addressed to them, are our only guide. The names of God, or of the gods, are taken from the phenomena of nature; the hymns addressed to them show that the name was only the symbol of a divine power behind the same. There are two ways in which men have sought to express, what is really inexpressible, the idea of God. The one is to take some one attribute of God, and to use it to express the whole. Jehovah, the Existent, the Almighty, the Eternal, the Lord—these are names which our moral consciousness tells us must be applicable to God; each declares only a part of His nature, but we use it to describe the whole. This was the method of the Hebrews; it looks on God as revealed in the human conscience. The other is to take the work for the worker, the phenomena of creation to express the Creator. This was the method of the Aryas; it looks on God as revealed in the frame of nature.

The oldest name for God among the Aryas is **Dyaus**, the sky or heaven. This has ever been looked on as the abode of God. Our Lord has taught us to address God as, Our Father which art in heaven. The Aryas addressed Him as **Dyaus-pitar**, Heaven-father. So closely did the earliest

name for God that we can discover among them approach to that fullest revelation which we have through Jesus Christ. By the time these Mantras were written, the original meaning of the word had dropped out of sight, and was used to express a distinct god, the husband of **Prithivi**, the earth. Heaven-Father and Earth-Mother come together as deities to be worshipped, and as the parents of gods and men.

There is one aspect of the heavens that more powerfully than any other evokes feelings of awe and devotion—that of the nightly heavens. It evoked the 8th Psalm, and to it we owe perhaps the highest conception of God, and some of the most devout poetry to be found in the Mantras. The original name for this aspect of the heavens seems to have been **Varuna**: by the time the hymns were composed it had come to be used only as the designation of God or of a god. In the hymns addressed to him we see the impress of the nightly heavens. The thousand stars have become the thousand eyes of the god, from whom the darkness cannot hide. The feelings of awe and contrition that find expression in them make them liker the Psalms than anything else in profane poetry. In the Mantras, as the god of the night, he is associated with **Mitra**, the god of the day. In modern Hinduism he is considered the god of the waters.

Beyond the visible firmament the mind conceives of something vaster, Infinite space. This is expressed in the Mantras by **Aditi**, conceived of as a goddess, and the parent of many

of the gods. The name **Aditya**, son of Aditi, is applied to Varuna, to **Surya**, the sun, also one of the Vedic gods, and to others; and we can understand the mental process that has led to this. After the Aryas had descended to the plains, and seen how by the blessing of rain they were changed from dry wastes to verdant pastures, that aspect of nature came to be of more importance to them, and was symbolised by **Indra**, *Jupiter Pluvius*, to whom more of the Mantras are addressed than to any other. He has more of a material character than those before mentioned: his birth is spoken of, and the process of anthropomorphism is apparent. This is not to be wondered at. Even to persons less impressible than these Aryan bards, the approach of the monsoon sweeping over the plains, with the piled clouds rising up in sharp distinction against the clear blue sky, with the lightning flashing, and the thunder rolling beneath, readily suggests the idea of a mighty king leading his hosts to battle. Scarcely less popular than he is **Agni**, the god of fire, as manifested on earth in sacrifice, in the air as lightning, in heaven as the sun. **Ushas**, the dawn, **Vayu**, the wind, **Rudra**, the storm, **Yama**, the god of the dead, are the principal remaining gods. **Vishnu** is also mentioned, though the origin of his conception is not so clear. In all, the total number of the Vedic gods is said to be thirty-three.

If we turn to the hymns to learn what conceptions were formed of the gods who were worshipped, and what kind of worship was paid to

them, we find in some a high conception of the deity addressed, and of the devotion due to him by the worshipper. This is specially the case in the hymns addressed to Varuna, in which the religion of the Mantras reaches its highest spiritual and ethical level. In the following hymn the sentiment of the omnipresence of the deity is vividly expressed :

“The mighty Lord on high our deeds, as if at hand,
espies :¹

The gods know all men do, though men would fain
their deeds disguise.

Whoever stands, whoever moves, or steals from place
to place,

Or hides him in his secret cell—the gods his move-
ments trace.

Wherever two together plot, and deem they are alone,
King Varuna is there, a third, and all their schemes
are known.

The earth is his, to him belongs those vast and bound-
less skies ;

Both seas² within him rest, and yet in that small pool
he lies.

Whoever far beyond the skies would think his way to
wing,

He would not there elude the grasp of Varuna the
king.”³

In the following hymn we have confession of
guilt and the prayer for mercy :

“1. Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter the house of clay ;
have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.

¹ Cf. Ps. xiv. 2, xxxiii. 13-15, cxxxix. 7-10.

² The waters above the firmament and the waters under the
firmament, Gen. i. 7.

³ Atharvan Veda, iv. 16, trans. Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, v. 64.

"2. If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.

"3. Through want of strength, thou strong and bright God, have I gone to the wrong shore ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.

"4. Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy.

"5. Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offence before the heavenly host ; whenever we break thy law through forgetfulness ; have mercy, Almighty, have mercy."¹

In this hymn we have in highly poetic figures the sentiment expressed that guilt was due to the force of circumstances, and to temptation being too strong, contrasting strongly with the sense of personal guilt expressed in the Psalms. In the following extract we see the same put more plainly :

"Absolve us from the sins of our fathers, and from those which we have committed with our own bodies.

"It was not our own doing, O Varuna, it was necessity, an intoxicating draught, passion, dice, thoughtlessness. The old is near to mislead the young : even sleep brings unrighteousness."²

We may here note another point in which the religion of the Mantras, at its very best, is different from that of the Psalms, and which differentiates the Christian religion from it, as from all other religions. While the need of forgiveness is expressed, the consciousness of forgiveness is absent. Such sentiments as, "Blessed is he whose trans-

¹ Rig Veda, vii. 89, trans. Max Müller, *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*.

² Rig Veda, vii. 86.

gression is forgiven, whose sin is covered ;"—“ Who forgiveth all thine iniquities ” ;—“ There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared ” ; are nowhere to be found in the Mantras. The human desire for forgiveness is expressed as in the Psalms, but there is no divine response. We have here another illustration of how truly our Lord, in proclaiming His gospel, “ Repentance and remission of sins,” responded to a want of the human heart, which the religions of man expressed, but which the highest of them failed to satisfy.

If not by forgiveness, how did the Aryas hope to escape the wrath of the gods ? By worshipping them ; and the nature and purpose of worship is shown in the following extract :

“ We deprecate thy wrath with *prostrations*, with *sacrifice*, and with *oblations* ; averter of misfortune, wise and illustrious, be present among us, and mitigate the evils we have committed.

“ Varuna, loose for me the upper, the middle, the lower band ;¹ so, son of Aditi, shall we, through faultlessness in thy worship, become freed from sin.”²

Hymns were chanted in worship, prostrations performed, and flowers and clarified butter offered in oblation. But the chief form of worship was the sacrifice, which was of four kinds—the goat, the cow, the horse, and the man. This last is the most savage feature in Aryan worship, but it is one of which we find traces in nearly all ancient

¹ The pride of life, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh,
1 John ii. 16.

² Rig Veda, i. 24.

religions. The sacrifice of the horse seems to have been considered the most important, and is one rite which links the Aryas with the northern races. The purpose of sacrifice, as expressed in the above extract, is deliverance from sin. As to how it effected this we find no attempt at explanation till a later period.

Deliverance from sin, however, was only a condition of getting further blessings. One of these is immortality, which the Aryas seem to have considered not natural to man, but to be attained through sacrifice. The following two verses show this. In the first we see very strongly the conception of Varuna as the god of the nightly heavens:

"These constellations placed on high, which are visible by night, and go elsewhere by day, are the undisturbed, holy works of Varuna; and by his command the moon moves resplendent by night.

"Praising thee with devout prayer, I implore thee for that life, which the institution of the sacrifice solicits with oblations; Varuna, undisdainful, bestow a thought on us; much lauded, take not away our existence."¹

It must not be supposed that these extracts are representative of the Mantras generally. They show their highest spiritual level, and this is found mostly in the hymns addressed to Varuna. In those addressed to the other gods we find lower and grosser conceptions of the god and much lower

¹ Rig Veda, i. 24. Sacrifice seems to have been considered also the source of the immortality of the gods. "Thou, Agni, hast been fed with oblations ever since the Adityas, devising the road to immortality, instituted all the rites," Rig Veda, i. 72.

ethical standards. Future blessings they did not desire. The boons they asked from their gods were temporal gifts, abundance of cattle, abundance of wealth, increase of children, life to a good old age, freedom from pain, triumph over their enemies. The Aryas seem from their hymns to have been a vigorous, hearty race, enjoying life, and living and acting only for the present.

How then shall we class the religion that finds expression in these hymns? It is not monotheism, nor is it definitely either polytheism or pantheism. The name that perhaps most nearly describes it is **henotheism**, or the worship of one god, as the only god with which the worshipper has to do, leaving it an open question whether there may not be other gods worshipped by others.

It is at this point that we may note the similarity between the early Arya and the early Hebrew religion. While there can be no doubt that the revelation on Sinai, when fully apprehended, declared Jehovah to be the only true God of all the earth, it was long before this truth was grasped by Israel. They looked on Jehovah as the only God of their nation. But they were confronted with the fact that the nations around worshipped other gods, Chemosh, Milcom, Ashtoreth, and Baal. The question irresistibly arose—What are these objects of worship? To this three answers might be given, each leading to a different form of religious faith. It might be said, They are no gods at all, leading to monotheism; or, They are

other gods, leading to polytheism; or, They are other names for the same God, leading to pantheism. In Israel the struggle was between the first and the second of these answers. Many even of the devout Israelites, while looking on Jehovah as the God of Israel, looked on these others as the gods of the other nations, as much entitled to their reverence as Jehovah was to theirs.¹ This could not long continue without weakening the exclusive worship of Jehovah. So their worship began to be conjoined with His, and thus polytheism was introduced into Israel.² The great mission of the prophets was to combat this idolatry, and to declare that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was the only true God of all the earth. After a long struggle, ending in the captivity of Babylon, they triumphed, and the religion of Israel became the purest monotheism the world had seen.

The religion of the Aryas, when the Mantras were composed, was a henotheism, in many respects like that of Israel, in the earlier stages of its history. Instead, however, of being confronted with the gods of various tribes and nations, they were confronted with the gods revealed through the various phenomena of nature. In most of the hymns the god addressed is addressed as though he alone existed, and the worshipper were not conscious of any other. When the question arose, What of these other gods? the answer varied between considering them other gods and other names of the same god. In some hymns we find several gods addressed in

¹ See Judg. xi. 23, 24.

² 1 Kings xi. 7.

succession, each as though each were the supreme god. In others we find the other gods identified with the one who is worshipped. Thus Agni is addressed :

“Thou, Agni, art Indra, the showerer of bounties on the good ; thou art the adorable Vishnu, hymned of many ; thou, Brahmanaspati, art Brahma, the possessor of riches ; thou, the author of various conditions, art associated with wisdom.

“Thou, Agni, art the royal Varuna, observant of holy vows ; thou art the adorable Mitra, destroyer of foes ; thou art Aryamān, the protector of the virtuous, whose liberality is enjoyed by all.”¹

In another hymn Aditi is addressed :

“Aditi is heaven ; Aditi is the firmament ; Aditi is mother, father, and son ; Aditi is all the gods ; Aditi is the five classes of men ; Aditi is generation and birth.”²

In this hymn we see the identification carried beyond the gods to all things, and it seems to be the most absolute pantheism. Yet this verse comes at the close of a hymn addressed not to Aditi but to Visvadevas, in which several other gods are praised. In other hymns we find jealousies and quarrels represented as arising among the gods. Polytheism seems to grow grosser, as pantheism grows more assertive.

But even when we apply these words, pantheism and polytheism, to the Mantras, we must beware of attributing to them any definite system of thought or of religion. These Mantras are the expressions of the childhood of the Aryan race. All great

¹ Rig Veda, ii. 1.

² *Ibid.* i. 72.

racess must have come through such a period, but only in the case of the Aryas have we the literature which it has produced. We seem to see in these hymns the Aryan race in its lusty childhood, looking out on the objects and appearances of nature, glad to see in them manifestations of a power beyond, after which their inner nature reached, and to which their conscience bore witness; ready to worship each or all in turn; careless whether they were manifestations of different powers or different manifestations of the same power. The mingling of puerilities and high and true thoughts is also a mark of what we may call the childhood of their religion. And as there comes a time when the child passes into a man, and the phantasies of childhood are forgotten, so there comes a time in the history of each race that has attained any development, when it asks the how and the why of its ancestral beliefs. Then these beliefs are stripped of their trappings, and either disappear or reappear under new forms and with new sanctions. Such a period came to the Aryan race, and we see its approach at the close of the Mantra period.

This appears in the use of abstract names for God instead of the older appellatives. One name for God begins to be used, **Prajāpati**, which means Lord of creation; and in a hymn addressed to him we have the nearest approach to monotheism to be found in the Mantras.

“1. Hiranyagarbha (the divine child) was present at the beginning; when begotten he was the sole Lord of created

being; ¹ he upheld this earth and heaven. To what deity shall we offer worship with an oblation?

"2. To him who is the giver of soul—the giver of strength; whose commands all beings, even the gods, obey; whose hiding-place is immortality, whose shadow is death. To what deity shall we offer worship with an oblation?

"4. Through whose greatness these snow-clad mountains exist; whose property men call the ocean with the rivers; whose are these quarters of space, whose are the two arms. To what deity shall we offer worship with an oblation?

"5. By whom the sky was made profound, and the earth solid; by whom heaven and the solar sphere were fixed; who was the measure of the arch in the firmament. To what deity shall we offer worship with an oblation?

"8. He who by his might beheld the waters all around containing the creative power; and giving birth to sacrifice; he who among the gods is the one supreme God. To what deity shall we offer worship with an oblation?

"10. No other than thou, Prajāpati, hast given existence to all these beings; may that object of our desires, for which we sacrifice to thee, be ours; may we be possessors of wealth."

One point may specially be noted about this remarkable hymn, the combination of high theology and sordid ethics. Nowhere in pagan literature do we get a higher expression of the unity and power of God. But when we see the gross material end to which all this high thought leads, we see that it is too pithless to lay hold on the conscience. An unmoral god is no god at all; and its worship cannot hold its own against pantheism.

¹ Cf. Prov. viii. 24-29.

We now come to an epoch-making hymn, the latest fruit of the Mantric age, and the germ of all religious thought in India ever since. It is addressed to **Paramātmā**, the Supreme Spirit. I give it in Dr. Muir's spirited translation :

“Then there was neither Nought nor Ought, nor air nor sky beyond,

What covered all? Where rested all? In watery gulf profound?

Nor death was then, nor deathlessness, nor change of night and day;

That ONE breathed calmly, self-sustained, nought else beyond It lay.

Gloom hid in gloom existed first—one sea eluding view,
That ONE, a void in chaos wrapped, by inward fervour grew.

Within It first arose desire, the primal germ of mind,
Which Nothing with Existence links, as sages searching find.

The kindling ray that shot across the dark and drear abyss,

Was it beneath or high aloft? what bard can answer this?

There fecundating powers were found, and mighty forces strove,

A self-supporting mass beneath and energy above.

Who knows, who ever told from whence this vast creation rose?

No gods had then been born: who then can e'er the truth disclose?

Whence sprang this world, and whether framed by hand divine or no?—

Its Lord in heaven alone can tell, if even he can show?”¹

It will be observed that the bard ignores all

¹ Rig Veda, x. 129, trans. by Dr. Muir in *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. v.

moral questions and questions of worship, as Hindu philosophy has done ever since, and confines himself entirely to speculation on Being. He tries to get behind all the phenomena of nature and the gods, whom they suggested, to the primal source of all things; which he finds in Paramātmā, the Supreme Spirit. This is the first time we find the doctrine of the Paramātmā, the only existence before there was any visible creation, and it has been the corner-stone of Hindu thought and faith ever since. Buddha, indeed, rejected it, but India rejected Buddhism. Then there is the distinction between the Non-existent and the Existent (lines 1 and 8). It is impossible to tell certainly whether the bard meant by Non-existent the Uncreated, and by the Existent the creation; or whether by the former he meant the visible universe, and by the latter the Supreme Spirit. From various expressions in the hymn, especially from his speaking in the last line of the Lord of creation in heaven, I am inclined to adopt the former alternative. The hymn might then be considered theistic, teaching that the visible universe was the creation of the invisible Spirit. But the language is not determinate, and Hindu thought has adopted the other alternative—that the Supreme is the only existence, and that the visible universe is non-existent, and only an illusion—the doctrine of **Māyā**.

Next we may notice the process of creation. It sprang from the "inward fervour" of the one Spirit (line 6). The word *tapasya* means properly intense thought or meditation; and Hindu philosophy has

given no other explanation of Creation. "The Supreme thought, I am one, I will become many"—such is all the advance that has been made on this hymn. The bard puts *desire* as the motive of creation. This idea Hindu philosophy has rejected as conditioning the Unconditioned Spirit. But we see the thought in Buddha's system. He did not deal with the origin of existence; but his second great principle was that *desire* prevented the cessation of existence.

The closing lines are specially worthy of note. Their burden is, Who knows how all this came to be? Ever since then the great aim of all Hindu theology has been to know and explain this. Knowledge has been considered the highest and only true way of salvation.

This Mantra may be considered the swan song of the Mantric age. It died calling on India to solve the riddle of the beliefs which had satisfied it, but which vanished the moment they were touched with speculative thought. When once the mind of the race had been directed to the Supreme Spirit that existed before creation, it was impossible that the worship of the nature gods should continue. The attitude of the hymn to these gods is, "No gods had then been born"; literally, "The gods were subsequent to the world's creation." The gods of the Mantras were expressed by the phenomena of creation, therefore could not have been till these were brought into existence. After this had laid hold on the mind, new hymns could not be addressed

to them with any sense of reality. The old mantras still continued to be repeated, but without life, and, by a process that will soon engage our attention, have been preserved in modern Hinduism, degraded to be magical formulæ instead of spiritual hymns, sound without sense. The gods whom they praised ceased to be worshipped, and were forgotten or survived under new conceptions, co-ordinated with new gods and with the whole creation, as outcomes of the Supreme Spirit, the only Existent one.

Thus, while in Israel the conflict was between polytheism and monotheism, which are mutually destructive, and, under the guidance of the prophets, issued in the overthrow of the former and the establishment of the latter; in India the conflict was between polytheism and pantheism, which are mutually accommodating, and, under the guidance of the sages, issued in the firm establishment of both.

CHAPTER II

THE VEDIC AND SUB-VEDIC AGE

FOLLOWING the age of the mantras comes the age of the **Vedas**, in which the earlier religion was developed, on the one hand into an elaborate system of worship, and on the other into a deep, if somewhat vague, philosophy. There are two elements in human nature constantly warring against the spiritual, and tending to destroy its power. The one is the magical, which tends to chain the spiritual instinct to certain forms of words and ceremonies, often originally the expression of its own aspirations. The other is the rational, which seeks to co-ordinate the objects of spiritual sense with the objects of natural sense and of the intellect.

Magic is properly the power or supposed power of making spirits subject to certain spells, so that when the master of the spell utters it, the spirit is bound to do the required work. When the spirit so bound is the object of worship, we have magic in religion, and the religion in which this prevails is magical religion. Opposed to it is spiritual religion, in which the Divine Spirit, the object of worship, is free to act as he wills, being subject to the in-

fluence of prayer and worship, just as man's spirit may be influenced by entreaty or other motives. Whenever a religion attains a high spiritual advance, the magical tendency at once begins to drag it down. And the process is very obvious. The hymns or prayers that were the sincere expression of the faith of those that uttered them, are repeated by their followers. At first they are repeated with some realisation of their meaning and some of the same faith as their authors had. By and by they come to be repeated as mere forms, in the mere repetition of which there is some virtue. Then comes change of language, while the old prayers are repeated without the variation of a single sound, in case that might impair their efficacy. Even the faith may change and still the same formulæ be repeated. Those who know them best come to be an organised priesthood, only in their mouths are they supposed to have any virtue; and then we have formal magic in religion. When this takes place, man's intellect revolts against it; he seeks relief in explanations of divine mysteries, which will satisfy his reason; and we have the rationalistic development of religion.

Both of these processes we see very clearly in the Vedas and subsequent literature of India.

There are four Vedas, the Rig, the Yajur, which has two parts, the Soma, and the Athārvan. Each of these consists of three parts, the **Samhita**, or collection of mantras, which is the foundation and represents the spiritual element; the **Brāhmanas**, which represents the magical development

of religion ; and the **Upanishads**, which represents the rationalistic development.

The oldest of the Vedas is the **Rig Veda**. It contains 1017 mantras, arranged in ten **Mandalas** or books, with the names of the deities to which they are addressed, and of the **Rishis** or poets by whom they were composed. It is in form the same as the Psalter or a hymnal, and might apparently be used as freely by the worshipper. In it we have the mantras, most probably in their original form, and there is nothing in the collection itself to indicate any ritualistic or magical development. It is when we look at the position assigned to them that we see the process beginning. They are **Sruti**, "that which has been heard." They are supposed to have existed from all eternity in their present form, and the Rishis were not inspired men who through them uttered wants which they felt and which all men feel, but sages who heard them, and reproduced them for the benefit of mortals. This is to deprive them of all value as expressions of the religious sentiments of men, and to give them only a magical value as forms, the repetition of which has some virtue.

The **Yajur Veda**, in which there are two collections or Samhitas : the **Taittiriya**, or black, and the **Vajasneyin**, or white, is composed of mantras taken mostly from the Rig Veda, arranged liturgically for use at the offering of sacrifices. The **Sama Veda** is likewise composed of mantras taken from the Rig Veda, arranged for the ritual of certain other sacrifices, designed, as far as we can learn, for the

benefit of the spirits of departed ancestors. In the mantras of these two Vedas we do not note any formal ritualism, except in the way in which they are arranged. It is when we come to the rubric, contained in the Brahmanas, that we see in what an utterly formal manner they were used.

The mantras of the fourth, the **Athārvan Veda**, are of a character entirely different from those of the other Vedas. They have not the form of prayers or hymns, but of spells: commands addressed to gods and demons, diseases and powers of nature, to accomplish some work or other. Some of the mantras seem composed for the special object of the spell, others seem to be old hymns with an imprecation tacked on to them.¹ Some are for deliverance from evils, some are to bring evil on other men. They seem to indicate among the old Aryas a stage of religion lower than that of the Rig Veda: a stage in which religion had

¹ The beautiful hymn to Varuna, p. 6, is found only in the Atharvan Veda. It is evidently one of the oldest of the mantras, but the following is its conclusion as given in that Veda:

“May all thy fateful toils, which seven by seven, threefold, lie spread out, ensnare him that speaks falsehood; him that speaks the truth shall they let go.

“With a hundred snares, O Varuna, surround him; let the line not go free from thee, O thou that observest men. The rogue shall sit, his belly hanging loose, like a cask without hoops, bursting all about.

“With the snare of Varuna, which is fastened lengthwise, and which is fastened broadwise, with the indigenous and the foreign, with the divine and the human.

“With all the snares do I fetter thee, o M. N., descended from M. N., the son of the woman, M. N.: all these do I design for thee.”

This is a very fair example of the spiritual level of the Atharvan Veda.

degenerated to magical worship of ghosts and demons, and in the midst of which the hymns of the Rig Veda come as signs of a great religious revival. The Atharvan Veda is in many respects the most interesting of the four, for it brings before us the daily life of the ancient Hindus, and the means they used to secure blessing on it. But its value in the study of religion is not so great: it never held the same place in the estimation of the Hindus as did the others, and it is more instructive to study how the mantras of the others came to occupy practically the same position as those of this Veda.

The **Brāhmanas** are the second part of each Veda. They, too, are considered Sruti, existent from all eternity in heaven, and only heard by the sages who have given them to the world. They are a new literature that sprung up in connection with the mantras, written by the Brahmans, and designed to help them in using the hymns in the ritual of the sacrifice. They profess to be a sort of rubric to guide in this, but in addition they contain many additional commands and stories. They may be considered the priestly literature of the age, and they show in a striking manner the blighting effect which their assumed power and priestly formalism had on the minds of the Brahmans themselves. "No one would have supposed that at so early a period, and in so primitive a state of society, there could have risen up a literature which for pedantry and downright absurdity can hardly be matched anywhere. . . . These works

deserve to be studied as the physician studies the twaddle of idiots and the raving of madmen. They will disclose to a thoughtful eye the ruins of faded grandeur, the memories of noble aspirations. But let us only try to translate these works into our own language, and we shall feel astonished that human language and human thought should ever have been used for such purposes.”¹

In these records we see a great development of polytheism. The original meaning of the names of the gods of the mantras had, with modification of language, been lost, and no suspicion is betrayed that they have a personality less defined than that of men. Some have dropped out of worship, others have assumed a foremost place. Indra is one of the principal gods, but Vishnu now disputes his place. An entirely new god appears, named **Brahmā**. It seems to have been a name given originally to whatever god was honoured in sacrifice, and we find him in the mantras identified with other gods. He is more definitely conceived of as the Creator. Some of the myths with regard to him are gross conceptions of the process of creation. He is sometimes represented as producing the universe from an egg, and sometimes as accomplishing this by separating himself into male and female. He was specially the god of the Brahmanical caste, but he never came to be popular with the other castes. As old gods assumed new places, or new ones appeared, fresh myths, growing constantly more sensuous, gathered round them.

¹ Max Müller, *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*,

At this period sacrifice was the great centre of religion. The four kinds of sacrifice in the early Aryan worship have been indicated. The first two, that of man and that of the cow, seem now to have dropped into disuse; and that of the horse and of the goat to have continued, the former of these, however, very rarely. There were three conceptions of the purpose of sacrifice. First, it was considered food for the gods. Second, it was considered a means of gaining power over men and gods; this being the special aim of the sacrifice of the horse. But generally its significance was expiatory, like those under the Levitical law. Its substitutionary nature is affirmed. The sacrificer is the animal.¹ By sacrificing he propitiates the gods, removes his sin,² breaks the cords of death, and enters the boat that ferrieth over to heaven.³ And if the question be asked, How can mere sacrifices effect all this? the answer is, "By faith the fire of sacrifice is kindled; by faith the offering is offered."⁴

Still more striking is the difference between the Vedic and the Levitical sacrifices. The latter were typical, the former were sacramental. The Levitical sacrifices all looked forward to and were fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary, when the great truth was revealed that God Himself had taken on Himself the burden of the world's guilt. And there, too, may we not say, the yearnings of the human soul, expressed in the old Vedic sacrifice, found

¹ Tait. Br. ii. 8. 2. ² Ait. Br. v. 25. ³ Ait. Br. 1. 13.

⁴ Rig Veda, x. 151; Tait. Br. ii. 8. 6. For a full list of texts illustrating this, see *Ind. Ev. Review*, June 1874.

their response—the only response that could fulfil them.

But well-nigh a thousand years before the coming of Christ, the Brahmans had felt the same truth and sought to give it effect by their own wisdom. Conscience seemingly that the animal could not of itself atone for the sin it bore, they declared that the god was himself in the animal sacrificed, and that thus it became efficacious. It is mostly Vishnu that is thus spoken of. He is said to have become incarnate in the animal slain in order to be sacrificed, and by his sacrifice to have become the greatest of the gods.

“Then the Gods said, ‘Whoever among us, through toil, austerity, faith, sacrifice, and oblation, first comprehends the issue of the sacrifice, let him be the most eminent of us; this shall be common to us all.’ To this they consented, saying, ‘Be it so.’ Vishnu first attained the proposed object. He became the most eminent of the gods. . . . He who is this Vishnu is sacrifice; he who is this sacrifice is Vishnu.”¹

How the god is present in the sacrifice, and the precise place of the priest in it, are explained in the ritual of another god, Prajāpati, the Creator. The resemblance to and the difference from the sacrifice of the mass in the Roman Catholic Church may be noted.

“Prajapati is this sacrifice. Prajapati is both of these two things, uttered and unuttered, finite and infinite. What the priest does with the Yajus text, with that he consecrates the form of Prajapati which is uttered and finite. And what he does silently with that he consecrates the form of Prajapati which is unuttered and infinite.”²

¹ For this and similar texts, see Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. iv. pp. 121-129.

² Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*, vol. v. p. 393.

This conception has never been entirely lost sight of in India. When we come to modern Hinduism, we shall see what an important place the doctrine of the **Avatār** or incarnation of Vishnu has. But the first conception of an incarnation was incarnation in sacrifice, and in the latest of the Purāṇas, the Bhāgavata, sacrifice is given as one of the twenty-two Avatars. Amid all the absurdities of the texts bearing on the subject, the great truth sought after must not be lost sight of.

This, however, only increased the original difficulty. If it was hard to believe that an animal could bear man's sin, it was harder to believe that an animal could be God and that God could be sacrificed as an animal. It was an idea that could consist only with a blind, tyrannical sacerdotalism, which led ultimately to its utter rejection by India; and meanwhile necessitated the thought of India finding an outlet in a more congenial direction. We find accordingly alongside of this magical development a rationalistic development, the records of which are called the **Upanishads**. They are also considered Sruti, existing beforehand in heaven, and heard and delivered to men by the sages who uttered them. But they are evidently the speculations of these same sages. They are the only parts of the Vedas now extensively read in India. They come at the end of the Vedas, and are therefore called **Vedānt** (Veda end); whence the name of the most influential school of modern Hindu philosophy, which professes to be founded on them.

It is hard to say what philosophical opinion might not be supported from the Upanishads, for the most contradictory statements find a place in them; yet the tendency on the whole is toward pantheism. They work out the note struck in the hymn to Paramātmā,¹ the supreme Spirit, which we have seen to be one of the latest of the mantras. In the earlier mantras, as we have seen, the worshippers of each individual god sought to exalt him to the position of the one God, by identifying him with other gods, and even with creation. What was at first mysticism was afterwards considered perfect philosophy. We find accordingly, in this latter part of the Vedas, attempts to explain on a rational basis all the poetical or mystical figures of the former parts. In one place it is stated that Self or Spirit alone existed, and he thought, Let me create the worlds, and he created the worlds. Again, Delusion is called the great principle, and this world the effect of Delusion on Spirit, while elsewhere Delusion is called one of the powers of Spirit. We find much pantheistic thought, but no pantheistic philosophy. The elements exist, but they are not yet systematised.

One result of this state of thought was modifying the belief in a future state into the doctrine of the **transmigration of souls**. This doctrine, which makes it necessary for a man to be born in a future birth to atone for the sins of this life, strikes at the root of sacrifice; but as it is only in modern Hinduism that it is fully developed, I defer the

¹ See p. 15.

consideration of it, merely noting that at this time it first appeared on the horizon of Hindu thought. One consequence which it had was to introduce asceticism and the practice of austerities. When happiness in a future state was made to depend on a man's works in his present state, it led him to seek to be free from those attachments which might hinder future bliss; and this led to his giving up the plain duties of life for meditation and penance. These came at last to be exalted by some as superior to everything else. Self-denial was sublimated into self-torture, and became an accepted symbol of sanctity.

These two currents of thought—pantheism and polytheism, philosophy and sacerdotalism—could not in such a country as India coexist without interpenetrating one another. The demon of heresy had not yet appeared to discredit old sanctions. The sages and the ascetics professed to be devout worshippers of the gods, and the priests adapted their religion to the ideas of the sages with a consistent logic such as is seen only in India. It was natural enough that they should take advantage of the doctrine of transmigration by prescribing ceremonies to attain beatitude in a future state. It was natural enough, too, that they should not be behindhand in the practice of those austerities which gave them an odour of sanctity with the people. But what shall we say of their declaring austerities to be the source of the power of the gods themselves, the origin of their very divinity? When religion had reached this stage, it had evi-

dently run to seed and was smitten with decay. And this is the stage to which the Vedas bring the religion of India.

One question that naturally arises is what effect the Vedic religion had on the social state of India? For an answer we turn to the books which were written subsequently to the Vedas, and which are called **Smriti**, remembered or traditional. They are not supposed to have the infallibility of the Vedas, but they are of great authority. The most important of these is the **Dharma Shashtra** or Law Book of **Manu**. From it we see that the system of **Caste** had developed, and he lays down its laws.

The origin of Caste must be looked for in the relation of the Aryas to the conquering nations. Of these the most important was the **Sudras**—possibly the *Hudrakoi* of Herodotus. As in Europe, from numbers of the Slavonic race being reduced to servitude, the name *esclave* or *slave* came to be applied to all bondmen, so in India the name Sudra came to be applied to all the conquered tribes. We know what a difference exists in any society between master and bondmen, especially when the latter are of a different race or colour; and race¹ and colour² are the meanings of the two words which in Sanscrit and Hindi stand for caste. We see in America an example of two races of different colours alongside of one another, and we see how the once enslaved race is despised by the other. The position assigned to the blacks even in times

¹ Jati.

² Varan.

of slavery in the Southern States was noble compared with that assigned to the Sudras by the code of Manu. No Southern State refused to allow the negroes to be baptized; but in India, while the lordly Aryas were the *twice-born*, the Sudras were only the *once-born*. They could assume no sacred thread, the symbol of the second birth, admitting them to the privileges and hopes of religion; and they were menaced with death if they dared to engage in any of the acts of worship allowed to their superiors.

This tyranny of race could not exist without reacting on the twice-born themselves. We know what a gap there was in America in time of slavery between the slave-owners and the poor whites; so, too, class distinctions sprang up among the Aryas, though on quite different principles, and with much more inexorable rules. The language of the mantras had become obsolete, and was known only to a class of men who had made it their business to study it, and thus held the key to all religious service. These were the worshipping or praying ones, the **Brāhmans**, who came to be looked on as demi-gods, the highest of castes, safe in unapproachable sanctity. It was the greatest of all crimes to put them to death, and therefore of whatever crime they might be guilty the utmost a king could do was to banish them from his kingdom. The **Kshatriyas**, or warriors, imitated their religious teachers, and claimed privileges which the Brahmins, who depended on them for protection, were fain to grant. They formed the second caste, with

a position little inferior to that of the Brahmins; and under them the **Vaisyas**, merchants and farmers, formed the third caste. These were the three castes of the twice-born, while the whole of the Sudras, or once-born, were slumped together as the fourth caste.

In the Institutes of Manu we get the following explanation of the origin of caste :

“That the human race might be multiplied, he (Brahma) caused the Brahman, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya, and the Sudra to proceed from his mouth, his arm, his thigh, and his foot.”¹

This is made the basis of legislation :

“A once-born man who insults the twice-born with gross invectives, ought to have his tongue slit; for he sprang from the lowest part of Brahma.”²

Manu defines the duties of each caste—the Brahmins were to teach and to sacrifice; the Kshatriyas to rule and defend the people; the Vaisyas to trade and to tend the cattle; the Sudras to serve the other three. Many of the precepts and laws he lays down are well designed for the good government of the State, and entitle him to a high place among legislators, though the foundation on which he rests is so faulty.

It will be seen that the Brahmins were at the head of the social edifice, and that their superiority rested on their position as priests and teachers. This superiority does not seem to have been yielded to them without a struggle between them and the

¹ Inst. of Manu, i. 31.

² *Ibid.* viii, 270.

Kshatriyas, who contested the first place with them. The details of the struggle are altogether lost, and the results are epitomised with an exaggeration which subsequent events prove to be altogether false. This much is known, that a great warrior, called **Parasu Rāma**,—possibly himself a Brahman,—espoused the cause of the Brahmans, and fought against the Kshatriyas with such success, that, in later myths, he is said to have extirpated them three times from the earth. At all events, after this the Brahmans were left undisturbed in their religious and social superiority, the counsellors, the priests, the gods of the kings, while these were carving out the history of the people.

Two great events belong to this period, which led to the writing of two of the sacred books that have had perhaps more influence on the religion of the Hindus than any others. The first is the expedition of **Rāma Chandra** from Ayodhya, or Oude, to Ceylon, to recover his wife, Sītā, who had been carried off by the king of that island. On the way he had to encounter many of the savage or semi-civilised tribes south of the Narbadda, and with them he formed alliances. He triumphed at last over Rāvana, king of Ceylon, and returned with his wife to Oude. This was the first great expedition of the Aryas to the south, and it is imprinted indelibly on the Hindu mind. It became the theme of song, a mass of tradition gathered around it, and in after ages it became the theme of an epic poem, the **Rāmāyana**, which, though containing many absurdities, yet contains

some of the noblest thoughts, and exhibits perhaps the finest example of conjugal love and fidelity to be found in any poetry.

The second great event was the struggle for supremacy between two great Kshatriya races, the **Pāndavas** and the **Kauravas**. After a bloody war the former triumphed, with the assistance of **Krishna**, a celebrated prince and hero, who became afterwards the most popular of the Hindu gods. The poem in which the narrative of this is embodied is called the **Mahābhārat**. It has been so encrusted with later additions of the Brahmans, didactic pieces and episodes, that it is now almost impossible to say what the original poem was. It and the Ramayana are called the **Itihāsas**, or histories, and as such are reckoned among the Smriti or traditions. And they are still all the history known to three-fourths of the Hindus. They are ignorant of all that has happened since: the rise and fall of Buddhism, the rise and fall of Mohammedan rule, the conquests of the English by whom they are now ruled, are for them blank pages of history; but the exile and expedition of Rāma, the adventures of the Pāndav brothers two thousand five hundred years ago, are for them great realities; and still, as they are recited at their yearly festivals, melt them into tears, move them to laughter, or excite them to triumph, with all the intensity of personal interest.

Thus it was that during this period the foundations of hero worship were being laid, which were afterwards to be woven into the system of Hinduism.

And there was yet another element which, though latent in so far as extant literature is concerned, we must believe existed with an extent and power which subsequent developments fully showed. All that we have been considering, in so far as religion, philosophy, and history are concerned, relates only to the twice-born. The once-born Sudras were out of the pale, and considered unfit for any religious worship. Yet we cannot but suppose that they sought God after own fashion,—that they had a worship of their own which their lords might ignore, but of which they were afterwards to feel the yoke. We may suppose that the Sudras, the great majority of the population of India, worshipped their own fetiches and deities, trees and serpents, stones and idols. Already they were beginning to have some influence on the upper castes, for we find the worship of images noticed in Manu.

Such was the state of Brahmanic India before Buddhism appeared. A rigid caste system consigned the bulk of the people to hopeless servitude, while it exalted the priesthood to the level of the gods, and left the warriors to fight and rule, and the merchants to trade and get gain. The Brahmanic power, however, was fully established in only a few parts of India, in others it was less so, in others not at all. The Sudras might in some parts be able to assert their equality even with the Brahmans, and for whole nations these would be merely foreign priests. The two opposite extremes

of consolidated Brahmanism and undisturbed aboriginal society and worship existed, and between the two every shade of opinion existed in an unsettled state, a fertile soil for a new and strong religion to take root in.

Premonitions of the rise of such a religion, seeking a basis more human and more ethical, began to appear in the eighth or ninth century before our era, in the religion which still survives as Jainism. But as the full force of the movement culminated in Buddhism, and as Jainism apparently took much of its final form from it, we shall take it up first.

CHAPTER III

BUDDHISM

BUDDHA, to whom Buddhism owes its rise, was born about six hundred years before our era in Kapila Vastu, the capital of a small kingdom near the foot of the Himalayas, of which his father was king. He was of the Kshatriya caste; he was of the Sakya clan, whence he is often called **Sakya Muni**, the Sakya Sage; his family name was **Gautama**, by which he is also widely known; his personal name was **Siddharta**, by which he is least known. **Buddha**, the enlightened, is the name which he assumed when he discovered the principles of his system; by it he is most generally known, and by it I will designate him.

His personal history has come down to us largely overlaid with fable, but from it the main facts of his life have been disentangled with much probability. Some of the details that may still be doubted are such important factors in the moulding of his system that they need to be at all events stated.

His mother, Maya, died in childbirth, an incident that is said to have affected him deeply in after life. He was educated with great care by his

father, who, warned by astrologers that his son would one day leave the kingdom and become an anchorite, brought him up in seclusion. Legends are told of his purity in the midst of the luxury of his father's court, and of his pre-eminence in manly sports. There is little doubt that he married, and lived for some years in the married state. We may believe that, having an eye for the sorrows of humanity, and a heart that could feel for them, he felt a growing disgust at the luxury with which he was surrounded, that ultimately drove him to break through all restraints and give himself up to asceticism. The occasion of this change in his life, and in the whole religious history of the East, was the following:—One day, driving to his pleasure garden, he saw a man covered with wrinkles, walking tremblingly along, leaning on his staff. He asked his charioteer who that man was, and the charioteer replied that he was a man suffering from **Old Age**. "Is that a condition to which he and his family alone are liable, or all mankind?" asked the prince. "He is no exception," replied the charioteer; "all men must fall into age and decrepitude." "Then drive my chariot home again," said the prince; "what have I to do with pleasure, who am the future abode of age and decay?" On another day he met a loathsome leper, and learned that all men were liable to **Disease**. On a third day he saw a dead body, and learned that **Death** was the end of all men. All happiness in his life of luxury had now fled, and he began to ponder how he might escape these woes. As he was

driving out on a fourth occasion, he saw a **Recluse**, and learned from his charioteer that this was a man who had renounced the world, lived on alms, and spent his time in meditation. This suggested to the prince how he might attain his end. He did not return at once to his palace as on previous occasions, but drove on to the garden, where he thought out the course he should pursue. He resolved to follow the example of the hermit and live a life like his, till he should discover a cure for the woes of man.

Full of this great resolve, he returned to the city. The gongs in the temples were sounding, and everything betokened that some event of great joy had taken place. He was met with the news that his wife had given birth to a son, an heir to the throne. This brought no joy to Buddha; he saw in it only another obstacle to his great purpose. He retired to his own apartments till the festivities of the day were over, and then went to take farewell of his wife. She was lying asleep, with her newborn babe at her breast. He dared not awake her lest his resolution should fail; so he forced himself to leave without farewell. He bade his groom saddle his horse, and, taking him as his only companion, left the city. All night he rode, and when morning dawned he had reached the frontier of his father's kingdom. He dismounted, cut off the locks which as a warrior prince he had worn, assumed the garb of a mendicant, gave his robes and horse to the groom, and sent him back with a message to his father and wife not to seek

him; "for," said he, "I will not return till I can bring them tidings of the great deliverance from suffering." His family did not interfere with his resolve; they seem to have kept in touch with him, and at times to have tried, but in vain, to woo him back. This step is called by the Buddhists the **Great Renunciation**.

The Brahmans were then, as now, the recognised religious teachers of the day, and Benares was then, as now, their chief seat, so he went thither to see what he could learn from them. He soon found that they were blind leaders of the blind, utterly unable to give him any guidance. He resolved, therefore, to go to the jungle and think out the problem, aided by the practice of the severest abstinence and mortification of the flesh. In this he was joined by six Brahmans, who admired his devotion. Six years he continued his fast, till he lost his strength, and one day fainted. When he recovered he was overcome with the thought of how nearly he had passed away without discovering the great remedy he was seeking. So he resolved to change his plan, and to care for all his bodily wants. This his Brahman followers considered relapsing into worldliness. They returned to Benares, and left him alone to solve the problem of suffering, and deliverance from it.

He was on the point of giving up the quest, but resolved on one final effort. He took with him food sufficient for forty days, went into the jungle, and took his station under a tree, called from that fact the **Bo** tree, or *bodddhi* tree, the tree of wisdom.

There he gave himself up to the closest thought and meditation. He had, especially towards the close, to endure a fearful mental struggle; demons seemed to assail him, and to try to force him to give up the quest. At last he saw the solution of the problem. The **Four Verities** of his system, opening up to him the way of deliverance, rose before his mind's eye.

These verities, discovered with such agony, we now proceed to examine.

1. The first thing which Buddha sought was to find the ultimate cause of all suffering. If the cause were discovered, the consequences could be dealt with. This cause he found to be existence. The first verity is, "Wherever there is existence there is suffering."

2. If existence ceased, suffering would then cease also; and the question came, What hinders the cessation of existence? The answer he found to be in the natural craving of man for it. His second verity is, "The desire for life prevents the cessation of existence."

3. Having discovered this, he thought he saw the way to the attainment of the end; this desire man could deal with. His third verity is, "The conquest of the desire for life will lead to the cessation of existence."

4. There remained only to teach how to conquer this desire, and for this he promulgated his law. The fourth truth is, "The law of Buddha is the path that leads to the conquest of the desire for life."

These principles must be looked at in view of the ideas of the time, and of Buddha's attitude with regard to them. What did Buddha understand by **Existence**? If we look back to the *Paramātmā Mantra*,¹ we see that in it **Existence** and **Non-existence** were put side by side, and stated in such a way that it was an open question as to whether the Supreme Spirit, to whom the hymn was addressed, was to be considered the existent or the non-existent one. Subsequent speculation raised the question whether this visible world was an illusion or was to be identified with the existent spirit. All this Buddha brushed aside, and said practically, This body, and this cosmos in which it is placed, is all the existence of which we know. If there is a Non-existent he is non-existent, and we have nothing to do with him. Hence, from the very beginning of his system, Buddha absolutely ignored a Supreme Spirit. He was a "negligeable quantity" in the problem, and man must work out his own salvation without him.

Uniformly connected with this existence was suffering, and the facts of existence showed no way of release from it. Death did not deliver from it, for birth repaired the ravages of death, but without any diminution of suffering in those who were born. What was the cause of this? The answer he gave was that it was due to **Karma**. This is a word which all must learn to understand who would understand Buddhism. In means properly deeds or acts. With Buddha it meant the principle

¹ See p. 15.

which guided the fruition of acts. -He believed there was a law which guided that, which required a due recompense for every act, as inexorably as the law which guided seedtime and harvest. And as such recompense is not always visible in the present life, this led to the affirmation of the **Transmigration** of souls, or rather the reincarnation of those who did the deeds. Buddha denied the soul of the universe, and he denied the human soul, so he could not teach its transmigration. But he taught that, when one being died, he was born again in the sense of the same parts being brought together again—like the parts of a Chinese puzzle, always the same, though put up in different forms. This involves an idea too abstract to be stable, and the idea of personal transmigration has been the practical one among the Buddhists, from which even Buddha himself could not escape.

This law of *karma* explained for Buddha the persistence of suffering among existent things. Every act must have some result: man's present acts determine what he shall be in his next state of existence; his present condition has been determined by his acts in a previous existence. Buddha also accepted the Brahmanical pantheon—its heavens with their gods, and its hells with its demons; but these, he taught, were merely places and forms of existence, analogous to earth and its inhabitants, and subject to the same law of *karma*. The gods had gained their high position by their works,—a principle recognised in Brahmanism,—and this implied that when the fruit of their works had been

fully enjoyed, that form of existence must give place to another in which suffering would come in as the recompense of other acts.

Thus no sphere of existence was exempt from the law of *karma*, and the suffering which it involved. But though *karma* determined the kind of existence, it did not determine the necessity of existence. This, Buddha taught, was desire. Here we must go back to the same hymn to the Supreme Spirit which we have already referred to, in order to understand the character of the thought of the time with which Buddha had to deal. We saw that, according to it, desire in the Supreme Spirit was the first germ which begot existence from non-existence, or was the origin of existence. Buddha ignored the question of the origin of existence, but he considered desire as it existed in man's mind to be the power which still linked non-existence with existence; and until it was conquered, existence could not be escaped. When it was conquered the soul arrived at **Nirvāna**.

This is a word which it is also needful to understand if we would understand Buddhism. It means, etymologically, either being without possession, or being possessed of nothing; but it is not, as has been often said, extinction of being. Buddha before his death is said to have used these words: "Through various transmigrations have I passed, always vainly seeking to discover the builder of my tabernacle. Painful are repeated transmigrations; but now, O builder, thou art discovered. Never shalt thou build me another house. Thy frames are broken,

thy ridge-pole shattered; to Nirvana my mind has gone. I have attained to the extinction of desire." This shows the original conception of Nirvana—not annihilation, but the condition which secures it; not a state either of supreme bliss, or of unconsciousness, or of non-existence, into which one enters at death; but a state into which one enters in life, in which selfishness or the desire for existence is extinguished, and which secures that there shall be nothing beyond death.

And how is Nirvana to be attained? For this Buddha prescribed his **Law**, which is the great glory of Buddhism. There seem to be two principles that guided him in formulating it: the extinction of desire or selfishness in man's own spirit, and the removal or diminution of suffering in the world. And he seems to have considered that the effort to relieve suffering in others was the best method to begin at all events the extinction of desire in one's self.

His law has a kernel—like the Decalogue. It has five negative commands—forbidding (1) the taking of life, (2) stealing, (3) adultery, (4) falsehood, (5) the taking of strong drink; and six positive commands—enjoining (1) charity, (2) purity, (3) patience, (4) courage, (5) contemplation, (6) science. These laws, especially the first under each section, are developed into all relations of life in a manner more extended than even the laws of the Pentateuch, and it is impossible not to be struck with the pure and kindly morality that pervades them.

Obedience to this law was, however, only the

first step towards attaining Nirvana; the second step was entering the priesthood. This is the surer method, and only those should enter it who by their lay life have shown a capacity for higher attainment. Both sexes may enter it. Celibacy is enjoined on those who do; and, in addition to all the virtues enjoined on the laity, they are required to avoid all luxury and self-seeking, to live abstemiously, to be contented with what is given them, to engage in meditation, and to teach the laity. Many additional commands and restrictions are laid down, some of which have a tendency to morbidness; but the original idea of the Buddhist priesthood seems to be a condition of further discipline, and more exalted usefulness.

Such was the solution of the problem of existence, and such the law of life, which, in its main features at all events, he reached through his terrible mental and spiritual struggle under the Bo tree. He had to pass through another struggle as severe before he could face the ordeal of teaching the new doctrine to the public. It struck at the root of all the religion of the time. It swept away the gods with their worship and sacrifices; it swept away caste with all its special privileges; it condemned even an asceticism that did not seek some form of service to others. To attempt such a revolution was indeed a task from which he might well shrink, and it was some time before even Buddha could face it. At last he triumphed: he returned to Benares, as he said to one whom he met on the way, to roll the "wheel of the law" he had discovered, so that

the news of deliverance might spread throughout the earth. He first sought out the Brahmans who had followed him for a time and then left him, and they became his first disciples. He taught for some time at Benares, and then visited other places. He returned to his native town, and persuaded his father, wife, and relatives to accept his law. His doctrines spread with rapidity: kings even became his disciples. He received all who came to him, making no distinction between the low-born Sudra and the high-born Brahman. Enthusiastic disciples spread his doctrines in all parts of India, visiting savage tribes among whom it had not been thought safe to go. He never swerved from the manner of life which he had chosen, but continued to the end a recluse, without a single worldly possession, never asking even for food, but taking all that was given him. So he went about from city to city, and village to village, till he was eighty years of age, when, having one day taken some unwholesome food, and having walked a long distance afterwards, he was seized with dysentery and died; or, as the Buddhists now say, he entered Nirvana.

After his death his religion continued to spread with even greater rapidity. Several causes contributed to this. In the first place, the old Brahmanism of India had run its course. While teaching some great truths, as we have seen, it had overlaid these with a system of magical sacerdotalism which revolted men's minds, and established a tyrannical system of caste, of which

the priests were the head, which made men's minds impatient and rebellious. They welcomed a system which commended itself to man's reason and conscience, even though it were wanting in spiritual sanctions, and which made all men equally free.

Then the character of Buddha himself helped his religion mightily. He is the one instance of a human teacher who in his life has been more than his teaching. Whatever he might call on his followers to do, he had done more. None of them could renounce more than he had renounced, or endure more than he had endured. He is one of the grandest pictures of self-denial, love to humanity and service of humanity, which the world has produced. High caste and low caste alike saw all that he had done to enlighten them and guide them. They could say, though in an altogether earthly sense, "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor." It is little wonder that multitudes became his followers, and sought to satisfy their religious craving, the ignoring of which is the great weakness of his system, by worshipping him, instead of the immoral and impotent deities whom the Brahmans had taught them to worship.

Then he succeeded in inspiring numbers of his disciples with a devotion like his own. Buddha allowed but one instrument in the spreading of his doctrines—persuasion. Subsequent legends do represent him as working miracles, but this was a power which he himself disclaimed. When urged by a king to perform miracles so as to confound

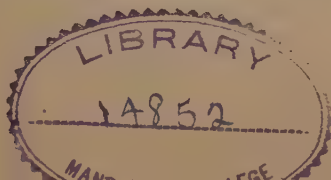
his enemies, he replied, "The law which I teach my disciples is not—Go before the Brahmans, and by the help of supernatural power perform miracles greater than man can perform. The law I give them is—Be silent about your good deeds, confess your sins." He likewise repudiated all force in spreading his doctrines; and in this respect Buddhists have obeyed the teaching of their master better than Christians have obeyed the teaching of theirs. But this was more than made up by the numbers and devotion of his missionary disciples. The legends with regard to them, though possibly as much exaggerated as those with regard to Buddha himself, show an ideal of missionary zeal and courage that account sufficiently for the rapid spread of Buddhism throughout India.

Buddhism not only rose above caste, it rose above nationality. Though Christianity was latent in Judaism, it had not yet been revealed; and Buddha was the first to teach a religion which might be common to all men, and to seek to awaken in man's heart the idea of a brotherhood as broad as the human race. One fatal defect, even in its humanitarian aspect, prevents Buddhism ever being the universal religion—its teaching that asceticism and celibacy are the highest attainments of religion. But it admits men and women of all castes and of all nations to the priesthood, and thus provides for universal diffusion.

This brings us to consider the defects of Buddhism which proved fatal to it in the land

of its birth, and which must ultimately prove fatal to it throughout the world. By some Buddhism is lauded as the best and most rational or all religions. Some have even pretended to see in the life of Christ a Palestinian reproduction of the life of Buddha; but when any of the points is examined, the resemblance is the resemblance of contrast. The temptation of Christ in the wilderness has been compared with the temptation of Buddha under the Bo tree; but the resemblance is merely in what is common to human nature. No man ever produced a great effect in religion, either of origination or reform, without having passed through a spiritual struggle himself; and the character of his struggle has given its character to the influence he has exerted in the world. This was true of Luther and Loyola; it was true of Buddha; and it was true also of Christ, who in this, as in everything, was true man. But when we compare the two struggles, nothing could be more unlike. Buddha's struggle was one from darkness into light, from ignorance into knowledge, and the temptation that came on him was to relinquish the struggle before he had arrived at the solution. Christ's struggle was one in the full possession of light against temptations to give up what He knew to be right. Buddha arrived at a conception of the duty of man, but the denial of God, and the goal of eternal death. Christ acted throughout in the knowledge that doing the will of God was the highest duty of man, and He did it in the strength of eternal life.

This initial struggle indicates the fatal defect of Buddha's religion—it is without God and without hope. It looks to annihilation as the final end; but human nature refuses to accept this. There is a school of Christian thought which teaches that the soul has no natural immortality, but that annihilation is the end of all who do not believe in Christ. What witness does the East bear to the moral influence or practical acceptability of such a doctrine? Annihilation—whether as taught by Buddha or as pantheistically modified by Hinduism—is the end sought by millions in India and in the further East. They believe that it is to be attained only by perfect holiness; the doctrine of conditional immortality teaches that it is to be attained by continued unbelief. If it were to spread in these lands, morality would lose what sanction it has in religion, and the eternal life offered by Christ would not seem a boon. Buddhism bears witness to the fact that man desires annihilation; it also bears witness to the fact that annihilation is unattainable by man even in thought. Nirvana has changed its meaning from a state of absence of desire before death, to a state of quiet repose after death, in which Buddha himself is supposed now to exist. The Buddhists now say that Buddha entered Nirvana, when they wish to say that he died. Both in Buddhism and in Hinduism, the immense number of births which they say must be passed through before it is attained, is practically saying that it is unattainable.



One of our best Buddhist scholars says: "The great merit of Buddha is that he swept away the soul theory." He swept it away with regard to man, and he swept it away with regard to the universe: he denied God. But he could not sweep away the soul *fact*. We have seen how he could not escape it for man, and he could not escape it for the universe. Having with terrible logic classed gods and demons with men as different orders of being, heaven and hell with earth as places through which the stream of being must pass, while he ignored the existence of a Supreme God, he was yet forced to acknowledge a mystery—a power real though unknowable—and in the doctrine of *karma* to erect an altar to the unknown God.

But none the less were the defects of atheism felt in the system. By it Buddha shut himself out from the possibility of having a divine revelation. He based his authority on knowledge, and that knowledge intuitional. He claimed, indeed, to have arrived at perfect knowledge, but he did not claim to have any power beyond that of other men, or any authority to which they might be compelled to bow. A more important defect, consequent on atheism, is the absence of power. Buddhism is a moral system, it is not a moral power. It offered India a perfect morality without God, but it failed to make India moral or to secure any hold on it. It offers nothing to satisfy the religious sense in man. Its appeal is to knowledge, not to faith. This prevents the highest conception of duty. The conception of accountability to God for the proper

use of our talents is impossible in Buddhism. The words of King Arthur :

“This life

I guard as God’s high gift from scathe and wrong,”

could never have been uttered by a Buddhist king.

This want was felt by Buddha’s successors. He came to be practically deified : miraculous legends gathered round the story of his life. These legends, along with his sayings or those attributed to him, were gathered into a canon to which was attributed all the authority of inspiration. The need of an object of worship was, if we may credit tradition, felt by Buddha. The author of Positivism in France felt this too, and tried to satisfy the craving by inventing a worship, having for its object “woman,” in the threefold relation of mother, wife, and daughter. So, too, the greater author of a greater system, two thousand five hundred years ago, found that he needed an object of worship. One of his dearest friends having been killed, Buddha preserved some relics of him, with a care and devotion which his followers were unable to distinguish from worship. So the worship of relics, especially of those of its founder, was introduced into Buddhism. Some of its finest temples are erected over relics of Buddha.

In another respect Positivism seems to be following the course of Buddhism. Statues of great men are set up in its halls of assembly ; days are consecrated to them, and thus an attempt at a cult is being made. This casts light on the origin of

Buddhist idolatry. Statues of Buddha and of other saints were erected, and divine honours were paid to them, till Buddhism, which began by denying that there is a god to be worshipped, has come to include the worship of thousands of idols. It is to the influence of Buddhism, too, that we must attribute the introduction of the worship of idols into Hinduism.

It is chiefly in northern Buddhism that this great lapse into idolatry has taken place. There, too, it has developed a sacerdotalism as stringent as the Brahmanical, and a debased ritualism beneath the lowest fetichism. Not only are prayers offered in an unknown tongue, it is not even necessary to repeat them. They are put into cylinders; these are made to revolve by the hand, by the wind, or by water power, and every revolution is considered the offering up of a prayer. Buddhism is the only religion which has sanctioned praying by machinery. But it would be as unfair to charge Buddhism with these corruptions as to charge Christianity with the many corruptions of it practised in many lands. They were probably old religious practices of the lands into which Buddhism penetrated, and were absorbed by it, as many of the old pagan festivals were absorbed by Christianity.

It has also to be observed that Buddhism has seldom established itself as the sole religion in any land. Even now in Ceylon, where it is supposed to have had undisputed sway for twenty centuries, it fails to satisfy the religious wants of the people. "In Ceylon the people look to Buddhism for de-

liverance as to the future world. By its instrumentality they suppose they can gain merit; but for present assistance, when the burden of affliction is heavy upon them, their resort is to the demon priest with his incantations and sacrifices." A system thus defective and one-sided is smitten with decay; it has foes in its own bosom, with which an enemy has only to unite to ensure its overthrow.

This was what took place in India. In two or three centuries Buddhism was triumphant throughout that land, and Brahmanism seemed to be superseded. But a struggle then began, which continued till the twelfth century, and resulted in the expulsion or absorption of Buddhism, and the establishment of Hinduism throughout India.

Thus, while Buddhism is the only great religious system constructed without God, it has become the most signal evidence that a religion without God is an impossibility for man—that a system that ignores God will come to be overrun with travesties of deity, and will not be able to hold its own against systems which, however inferior as codes of morals, frankly acknowledge the Supernatural. Buddhism comes fraught with the experience of twenty-three centuries, warning this age of science and agnosticism, of materialism and scepticism, that man cannot live without God. The most splendid religion of humanity, the most perfect system of morality that man has produced, has failed because it ignores God.

CHAPTER IV

JAINISM

IN speaking of the Sub-Vedic age, we have mentioned the growth of various forms of asceticism. It is probably in these that we are to look for the origin of the religion called Jainism. According to Jain tradition, the original founder of the sect was **Pārswa** or **Pārswanāth**, as he was afterwards called. He was the son of a king called Aswasena, and was of one of the noblest Kshatriya families. He gave up his kingdom, and became an ascetic, when he was about thirty years of age. He lived a hermit life in the jungle or in mountain caves, and took the name of **Jina**, or conqueror, *i.e.* conqueror of worldly lusts and ambitions. Large numbers followed him, and were hence called **Jainas** or **Jains**. He is said to have died on Sikhar, a mountain of Southern Behar, at the age of nearly a hundred. Little is known of his teaching. It was from **Mahavira**, who lived about two hundred years later, in the seventh century B.C., and whose death, according to the Jains, occurred thirty years before that of Buddha, that the system took its definite form. He was of the same royal house as Parswanath, and became a disciple of his ;

but in one respect he went beyond his master. Parswanath had carried his asceticism so far as to have no covering but a piece of white cloth; Mahavira carried his to the point of dispensing with all covering whatever. He did not carry all his co-religionists with him in his new departure; and hence two sects sprang up among them, the **Swetambaras**, or "clothed in white," and the **Digambaras**, or "clothed in space." The latter, however, though still the stricter sect, do not, even in the case of their holy men, carry out this theory of dress.

It is to be noted that these two leaders were of the warrior, not of the priestly, caste, as was also Buddha subsequently. This seems to show that their movement was one of rebellion against Brahmanical assumptions. This is confirmed by the bitterness against the Brahmans showed in the earliest Jaina literature, though it is much later than the origin of the sect. In the **Kalpa Sutra**, the history of Mahavira, that Jina is represented as having been conceived in the womb of the wife of a Brahman, whereupon Indra, the chief of the gods, is represented as reflecting, "Surely such a thing as this has never happened in past, happens not in present, and will not happen in future times, that an Arhat, a Chakravarti, a Baladeva, or a Basudeva¹ should be born in a low-caste family, a servile family, a degraded family, a poor family, a mean family, a beggar's family, or a Brahman's family."

¹ Names for Jinās.

On the other hand, the Brahmans applied to them, as they did also to the Buddhists, the term **Nastik**. This is usually translated atheist. It means, more properly, denier of existence. It is applied properly to those who deny the Supreme Spirit, the only existent One; but it is generally applied to those who deny the authority of the Vedas. The Jains denied both the Supreme Spirit and the Vedas. They believe in the eternity of the universe both of matter and of mind,—the latter including the elements of human souls,—which has been undergoing a series of revolutions produced by the inherent powers of nature without the intervention of any eternal deity, no such being, according to them, existing independent of the cosmos. They believe in a cosmical system, including heavens and hells as well as the earth, and in the transmigrations of souls through them. Certain of the world's elements may be sublimated into gods, who inhabit the various heavens that exist; but they must again come to earth as animals or men, or enter the various hells as demons, till they finally triumph over matter, and can exist free from its trammels.

This has been attained only by the **Jinas** or **Tirthankars**, of whom there are said to be twenty-four. Parswanath and Mahavira are said to be the last of them. The preceding twenty-two are evidently fictitious, though in **Rikhab Deva**, the first of them, we have some reminiscences of historic tradition. They are said by their austerities and meditation to have triumphed over all matter, and

by their own powers to have entered into the supreme bliss—to be, therefore, greater than the gods, and the only proper objects of worship. Through their merit, several thousand disciples who were on earth when they lived, entered with them into the ineffable bliss. The Kalpa Sutra, in epitomising the history of the Tirthankars who lived before Mahavira, is careful to mention the numbers who entered with each of them into the final state. This, according to the Jain faith, is the only way of salvation. By some extraordinary merit, some one may, in some future age, become a Jina and secure final bliss; or by inferior merit some may be born on the earth when he appears, and enter into bliss along with him. It is the narrowest basis of salvation that has ever been conceived by any religion. Jains to whom I have reproached this have acknowledged it, and rather gloried in it as showing the select superiority of their religion.

In their ethical code they resemble the Buddhists in many points, but with marked differences. The five sins forbidden are—(1) killing, (2) lying, (3) stealing, (4) adultery, (5) worldly-mindedness. This is the same as the negative side of the Buddhist law, with the exception of the fifth, which in the Buddhist law is strong drink. The Jain law seems here to take the wider sweep, but it is practically a basis for asceticism. The positive duties enjoined are five—(1) mercy to all animated beings, (2) almsgiving, (3) venerating the sages while living and worshipping their images when

dead, (4) confession of faults, (5) religious fasting. If this be compared with the positive side of the Buddhist code, it will be seen how inferior it is, and how it too tends to limit the range of Jainism. It is thus not surprising that, while Buddhism has come to be one of the world religions, Jainism has continued to be one of the narrowest sects of India. But it is this very narrowness that has enabled it to maintain itself in India, while Buddhism has been expelled. Hinduism found in the latter a rival which could not exist alongside of it, which must either expel it or be expelled. It found in Jainism a sect which could exist alongside of it or within it without causing much danger. So Jainism survives in India, while its younger and more powerful rival has been expelled; and by its environment it has come to be little more than a caste of Hindus. It is confined now to some of the Vaisya or mercantile castes, who represent more than any other the *vis inertiae* of India. The Jains number at present rather less than one and a half million. They are found chiefly in Rajputana, Guzerat, and Western India. They are mostly enterprising men of business, and a great part of the wealth of the community is in their hands.

If we turn to the development of religion among them, we see all the corruptions which human nature would naturally bring into such a system as I have sketched above. The solitary moral precept in their positive code illustrates the whole spirit of their religion, and, in fact, gives it its

distinctive outward aspect among the religions of India. It enjoins mercy to all animated beings. Animated beings include insects as well as men; in the eyes of the Jains their lives are as sacred as those of men, and their destruction as great a sin. Some of their sophistical devices to get quit of vermin are amusing, but hardly bear repetition. One great act of religious merit is to feed ants and such like. A handful of rice will thus feed hundreds of lives, whereas, if given to a man, it would not supply a meal for a single life. Then mercy is restricted to not taking life by violence; it does not require avoidance of giving pain. A Jain has no scruple in mercilessly overloading his bullock or his horse, and urging it with goad or whip till it falls from fatigue. When it is too old to be serviceable, it is a sin against the law of mercy to put it out of pain by shooting it; but it is no sin against the law of mercy to withhold its food till it dies, when the owner will weep over its fate. Mercy shown to human beings is not considered of much merit, unless it be shown in feeding religious mendicants. Hospitals have been maintained by Jains for stray dogs and other animals, but not for afflicted human beings.

With regard to truthfulness, the Jains are much the same as the average Hindu. Their ideas of chastity are also those of the Hindus; but it says a good deal for their treatment of women that they are almost the only caste in which the females are in excess of the males.

The need of worship among the Jains finds satis-

faction in the worship of the Tirthankars and of their religious guides. Pilgrimages to the shrines of the former are one of their chief religious acts. Tirthankar means author of a *tirth* or place of pilgrimage. It is true the Jains say their tirth is a moral tirth. None the less are the shrines sacred to the various Tirthankars visited by numbers of pilgrims. That especially of Rikhab Dev, the first of the Tirthankars, in the wild Bhil country to the south of Udaipur, draws annually thousands of pilgrims from all parts where Jains are to be found.

There are two classes of priests among the Jains, the **Dhundhiyas** and the **Jatis**. The former, who include females as well as males, are wandering ascetics. The word means seekers—seekers of holiness. They have not much learning; they seek holiness mainly by taking great care not to destroy life. They always have a cloth over their mouth, lest any insect be drawn in by the inhaling of the breath. They carry a broom to sweep the ground before they sit down, lest they should crush any animal. The laity may gain some merit by giving them food and alms.

The *jatis* are somewhat superior to these. The word means one who strives. They have each their temple and parish, and must be instructed in the Jain scriptures. They are celibates, and maintain their caste by adopting sons, mostly from Rajputs and Brahmans, seldom from the Jains themselves. They are supposed to carry out in their own persons the requirements of Jainism, while the laity wor-

ship them and bring them gifts that they may benefit from their merit. The first native of India that I was privileged to receive into the Christian Church belonged to this class. He was a Rajput, had been sold by his parents to a *jati* in time of famine, been trained as his disciple, and at his death inherited his money and his diocese. He gave me an insight into some of the tricks of the priesthood.

It is one of the rules of the *jatihood* to drink only water that has been boiled, so as to avoid destroying insect life; but they may not boil it themselves or order it to be boiled, as that would be committing the same sin. So, when he went to one of his villages he went to the first Jain house and asked if they had any boiled water. If they had not he said he would go and look for it elsewhere. They understood quite well what that meant, and had some water boiled, so that when he returned it might be ready for him. They, of course, incurred the sin of destroying the life in the water, but that did not matter for them, as they were laity. Their priest was preserved from sin, and they benefited from his merit.

Certain fasts are enjoined on the Jains; but these, too, are observed by proxy, the *jati* fasting while his flock worship him and bring him gifts. The fast is observed in public, the *jati* sitting on an elevated dais in presence of his worshippers, so that there may be no doubt as to the reality of the fast, and giving additional potency to the function by reading aloud the sacred books. But

a cloth must be over the mouth to prevent insects from entering; this cloth can be conveniently arranged to hang over the knees while sitting, and under it a good dish of provisions may be concealed, which may be slipped into the mouth without the worshippers' notice.

The Jain religion is a feeble religion. It is not identified with any great principle, spiritual, philosophical, or ethical, except it be the care of insect life. There are no great names in its history, nor has it produced any literature deserving the name. It began by opposing Brahmanism, and it has ended by becoming practically a caste of Hindus. Brahman are priests in some of the temples of the Swetambaras, and by a decision of the High Court of Bombay it has been ruled that the laws of the orthodox Hindus are binding on the Jains.

CHAPTER V

HINDU PHILOSOPHY

BUDDHISM seems to have culminated in India about the beginning of our era. Two hundred years earlier it assumed a character decidedly hostile to Brahmanism. At first it seems to have existed alongside of it on a basis of mutual toleration. But the decrees of King Asoka, a convert to Buddhism, and paramount sovereign of India, showed an intention to establish the new faith at the expense of the older one. This roused the Brahmans to more earnest battle for their religion, quickened their intellectual life, and made them more pliable in adapting their systems to the cults of the various tribes with which they came into contact. This Brahmanical revival continued to struggle with Buddhism, till by the twelfth century of our era it had extirpated it from India. It is to it that modern Hinduism owes its character, and it is therefore of more practical interest than any form of religious thought that preceded it.

The brief survey we have taken of the earlier religions of India, prepares us for the better understanding of that subtle and complex system with which Christianity has now to contend. I will not touch on the political movements which aided it,

but will rather seek to indicate those principles and methods, still in operation, by which it triumphed over its great foe, and attached to itself, or is still attaching to itself, the various tribes of India. In doing this I must ask the English reader to follow me into a somewhat abstruse region of thought, most likely quite foreign to him, but which it is necessary to master in order to understand Hindu idolatry. I can only promise to do my best to make the subject clear.

There are two features in the Brahmanical revival which must be grasped in order to understand Hinduism — the intellectual revival among the Brahmans, producing Hindu **Philosophy**, and the application of that philosophy to the popular superstitions, producing Hindu **Religion**.

The first step was the revival of intellectual activity among the Brahmans. Appeal to the authority of the Vedas was now of no use to them: their Buddhist adversaries required them to prove all things. They therefore strove to combat them with their own weapons, and in succession rose the six schools of Hindu philosophy.¹ These all started with the acknowledgment of the Vedas as the rule of faith; but except one, whose leading tenet is the eternity of the Word, they all practically ignore them, and found their systems on the deductions of pure reason. I do not propose to give any account of these systems, but will seek to exhibit their effect in moulding Hindu thought into the form in which we now find it.

¹ See Appendix.

To understand any philosophy or religion aright, we must know what it teaches to be the highest good. Ask a Hindu what is the chief end of man, and he will answer, **Liberation**,¹ whether he be peasant or pundit. Ask him what he means by liberation, and he will say that it is to be freed from illusion, or "to cut short the eighty-four." Here we are already in a sphere of thought and expression quite foreign to the European, and requiring explanation.

The position of the **Vedānta**, the most generally accepted philosophy in India, may be stated briefly thus: There is only one really-existent being, the universal Spirit. Our spirits must therefore be part of It; but by reason of delusion we cannot realise our identity. Liberation from this delusion will enable us to realise our identity with the Supreme Spirit, and to become one with It. Let us look at this in detail.

The fundamental principle of Hindu philosophy is that out of nothing, nothing can be made; therefore whatever exists now must have existed from all eternity. What alone has existed from all eternity? The answer is, the **Supreme Spirit**.² He is the **One without a second**.³ This is as fundamental a principle of Hinduism as "The LORD our God is one LORD" is of Judaism.

Now the question comes, Who or what is this Supreme Spirit? It has been objected to the Vedantic deity, that it is a mere abstraction or negation, and that therefore the system is as

¹ Mukti.

² Paramātmā.

³ Ekamevādwyam.

atheistic as Buddhism. This is founded on the word used to describe the Supreme Spirit as distinguished from the human spirit, which in popular language means void of qualities.¹ But the word means properly without bonds—unfettered. The word which in modern European philosophy corresponds most nearly to it is Unconditioned. The Supreme Spirit is Unconditioned,¹ while the human spirit is conditioned.² And to the question, What is the Supreme Spirit? the Hindus reply that It is **Being, Thought, Joy.**³

We, trained as we are to believe in the personality of God, have difficulty in conceiving an impersonal God, and in perceiving the full bearing of such a definition. But let us try to introduce into it the idea of personality, and consequent relationship, chiefly the relationship of the Creator to the creature, imparting what He Himself has, and we have: the imparters of Being, the Creator; the imparters of Thought, the Word; the imparters of Joy, the Comforter. Here, then, in the Vedantic Trinity we have a certain analogy to the Christian Trinity. How it may have arisen we cannot now determine. However it may be accounted for, and whatever its value, such is the Hindu idea of the Supreme Spirit. On this prime question of theology the distinction between Hinduism and Christianity is as to the personality of God.

Here, too, we may note the first position which the Hindus take against the Buddhists. They go

¹ Nirguna.

² Saguna.

³ Sat, Chit, Ananda: Sachchidānandaha.

behind the cosmical existence with which alone the Buddhists deal, to the Spirit from which it proceeds, and which is the only real existence. To the Buddhist principle, Wherever there is existence there is suffering, they oppose the principle, Wherever there is pure existence there is joy, as well as being and thought. This explains, too, the terms which they apply to both Jains and Buddhists, *Nastik*. This is usually translated atheist. But it means rather one who denies existence—who denies the only existent One. Atheist, however, may pass, and enables us to characterise the three religions—Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism—as theistic, pantheistic, and atheistic.

If, then, the Supreme Spirit is the only existence, it follows that our spirits are parts of Him. This the Hindu maintains. In doing so he is met by those facts which for the Englishman decide the question, and against which the whole of Hindu philosophy is a vain struggle—the facts of consciousness. We are not conscious that we are parts of the Supreme Spirit; we are conscious of imperfection and limitation, contradictory of our idea of God. These facts the Hindus, too, acknowledge, and they explain them by *maya*.

And what is *maya*? It means properly illusion, or delusion. It is an attempt to explain the consciousness of man, and the existence of an external world, in harmony with the sole existence of the Supreme Spirit, and another principle equally fundamental for Hinduism—Nothing from nothing.

They attribute to it two effects, enveloping the soul, which gives rise to the conceit of personality; and projecting the appearance of a world, which the individual imagines to be external to himself, but which in reality is but a projection of the spirit, as the figure on the screen is the projection of the picture in the magic lantern. In its effect on the soul it may be translated delusion; in regard to the external world, illusion. Spirit, thus invested or deluded, is what the universe consists of.

This abstract speculation will be better understood by the help of a simile which the Hindus often employ. This life is like a dream: we fall asleep; we imagine things to be around us which are only the creations of the brain, but which have for us all the value of realities; we wake up and find that they are all an illusion. So shall we one day wake up and find that all the external universe, which we now imagine to be about us, has been but the play of our spirit, and has vanished "like the baseless fabric of a vision."

A pundit, who had some acquaintance with English literature, quoted to me the following incident, which I had previously read, to prove the truth of the Hindu theory:—"A man was once labouring under the mania that he was so swollen that he could not pass through an ordinary door. Some of his friends thought that the best way to cure him of his delusion was to pull him through it; and this they did, notwithstanding his struggles and screams. When he had been pulled through, he fell down in an agony, as if he had been bruised

all over, and died from the mental effects." The door evidently did not appear the same to him as to his friends; but what right have we to explain that by madness? The Hindus maintain it is all illusion, and the practical effect on the unfortunate man showed that the illusion was real enough for him.

Meanwhile man's spirit is subject to this illusion, and is therefore subject to conditions or qualities. As to what these conditions are, the Hindus take the explanation of an earlier philosophy—the **Sāṅkhya**, which accounts for the creation of the world by an eternal **Prakriti**, which corresponds very much with the "cosmic vapour." The Vedantists maintain that it is really illusion, though practically a reality. It is supposed to consist of an equipoise of three qualities, which may be translated **Intelligence**, **Passion**, **Darkness**.¹ Where intelligence prevails, we have such beings as men; where passion or foulness prevails, we have such beings as the lower animals; where darkness or indifference prevails, such beings as trees and stones. The Spirit or self imprisoned in all these is the same with the Supreme Spirit; its final end is to be freed from all, and identified with its parent source. After this liberation man must consciously strive.

Here, in passing, we may note one effect which this doctrine of *maya* has on the Hindu mind—its incapacity of judging of historical truth. The two great histories known to the Hindus are the Ramayan and the Mahabharat,² and they are filled

¹ Sat, Raj, Tamas.

² See pp. 32, 33.

with incidents that put all physical truth at defiance. Thus, in the former, Humayun, the ally of Rama Chandra, is represented as a monkey. He crosses over to Ceylon to spy out the city of Ravan, Rama's great foe. When he arrives there he changes himself into a rat, and so gains admission into Ravan's palace. When he gets all the information he desires, he resumes his own form. He is seized and brought before Ravan. As no seat is provided for him, and he refuses to sit any lower than the king, he causes his tail to grow till it is of an enormous length, coils it up as a sailor does a rope till it is higher than the king's throne, sits on the top of it, whence he answers all the king's questions in a way that turns them into ridicule. Confront a Hindu with the utter impossibility of these incidents according to the constitution of nature, and he will reply at once, "*Maya*," illusion; there can be no more fixed laws for illusion than for a dream. Such stories in a European book would be looked on as fairy tales, impossible in fact; but Hindu philosophy has supplied the Hindus with a theory of the universe according to which such events are as natural as the ordinary incidents of daily life. Even well-educated Hindus still look on the records of their "histories" as *facts*, while records of modern history, such as the stories of the outrages of the Sepoys during the Mutiny, they look on as the inventions of the English. Another consequence is seen in their readiness to accept any jugglery as a *bonâ fide* exertion of supernatural power, and their resentment if it be

proved that they have been tricked. Madam Blavatszky gained credence in Madras by manifestations which the Hindus considered evidence of her power over *maya*. When she was exposed, and it was shown that the manifestations were produced by mechanical contrivances, they at once lost faith in her for everything, and refused to listen to her any more.

To return to the question of liberation from *maya*: it might seem that at death, when the spirit quits the body, it will be free to join the Supreme. But here it is fettered by another bond, its deeds in the body. The same problems of the world faced the Brahmanical philosophers as faced Buddha—joy and sorrow unequally meted, vice prosperous and virtue oppressed; babes, who have done neither good nor evil, born some to plenty, some to poverty; some with an inherent proclivity towards evil surrounded with every temptation to sin, others with a natural leaning to virtue surrounded with every influence for good. And they come to the same conclusion as Buddha did, that there must be a future life, in which the inequalities of this life are redressed, and a past life to which the inequalities of the present life are due.

The idea of vicarious atonement has in one form or other found a place in nearly all systems of religion. The instinctive feeling of man, that sin places him in opposition to God and must be punished, found refuge in the earlier religions of India, as we have seen, in the offering of vicarious

sacrifice. This left many mysteries unexplained; how sufferings that could not be traced to any cause were to be accounted for; how sacrifice might be attained by some and not by others. This the Hindus now account for by saying that men in this life are reaping the fruit of what they have done in a former life, though from the effects of *maya* they are ignorant of it. They thus try to reconcile the principle of natural justice—that each man should suffer for his own deeds—with the principle of vicarious atonement, which seems man's instinctive refuge from the consequences which he is conscious must flow from his sins. We suffer for what we ourselves have done, though we are not conscious of having done it. We shall be recompensed in a future birth for what we do now, though we shall have forgotten this life so entirely as to be in fact another person. The law according to which this occurs is **Karma**, the law of fruition with which Buddha dowered India. Hindu philosophy has adopted it, though it has endeavoured with only partial success to depose it from the supreme place which he gave it.

A pundit, with whom I had once occasion to discuss the subject, used the following illustration: "We are bound to existence by two chains, one a golden chain, the other an iron chain. The golden chain is virtue, the iron chain is vice. We perform virtuous deeds, and we must exist to receive their reward; we do bad deeds, and we must exist in order to receive their punishment. The golden chain is pleasanter than the iron one; but both are

fetters, and from both should we seek to be free." This illustrates both the principles and spirit of Hinduism. All action, whether good or bad, binds us, and there is an aim to be sought beyond happiness. If a man of low rank do his duty aright, he may be born in his next birth as a king. If as a king he rules well, he may in his next birth be a god in heaven, and spend ages there. But even there he may at any moment commit a slip, or in a previous birth he may have been guilty of a sin still unexpiated, which will require his being born again as a demon, an animal, or a low-caste man. There is no security of rest till the spirit is delivered from its own personality.

The Hindus try to explain this to themselves by another simile, and with them a simile has much of the force of an argument. They say: Spirit is one as water is one; but some water may be drawn up from the ocean in the form of vapour, then it may become a cloud, then fall on the earth in the form of rain; be absorbed in some plant and become its sap; it may be eaten by a cow and become milk; and so on, changing from form to form, till at last it may fall into some river, and so find its way again to the ocean. In this figure the ocean will represent the Supreme Spirit, and the other conditions of water, spirit in connection with matter or illusion. When any portion of the Supreme Spirit is, as it were, exhaled, and comes under the power of illusion, it must pass through men and animals, through gods and devils, through trees and stones,—always when it quits one body being forced

by what it has done in it or in some previous body, to enter another to be recompensed for what it has done. So it must continue, ignorant of whence it has come or whither it is going, till the full tale of births, said to be eighty-four lakhs, or eighty-four hundred thousand, is completed. Then its good and evil deeds may be fully atoned for by its joys and sorrows; it may be emancipated from *maya*, and free to join the Supreme. But the Hindus have also a hope that they may not be forced to endure all this; that they may find a direct passage to the Supreme, and be freed from all further birth. This is what they mean when they say that Liberation is to cut short the eighty-four.

Thus far the Hindu system has developed itself with a certain logic. But two testing questions occur here: What led any portion of spirit to come under the power of illusion? and according to what law do these transmigrations take place?

In answer to the first question, the Hindus say: The Supreme Spirit was one, and he thought, "I will become many." There is here a recognition of supreme will; but if asked what led him to wish to become many, they allow that there is something for which they cannot account. The conception of the old Vedic hymn to the Supreme Spirit,¹ that Desire was the origin of creation, could have no place in the developed Hindu philosophy, for that would imply that the Supreme was already

¹ See pp. 15, 17.

conditioned or subject to bonds. On the other hand, they consider Thought the second constituent of spirit, and in attributing what is practically creation to it, we may find the counterpart of the teaching of the Bible, that all things were made by the Word.

The second question, as to the law or power that governs the succession of births, is one which Hindu philosophy has felt the need of facing. In this it has gone a step beyond Buddhism. It has recognised that if there is in *karma* a power to bind man to distinct existence, and to regulate the nature of that existence, it must be derived. But it has taken this step only to find the darkness more intense. The only explanation it can give is **Adrishta**, the Unseen—the Unknown and Unknowable. By intellectual analysis it has resolved the Buddhist *karma* into its visible effects or deeds, and its invisible cause, the Unseen. It has escaped atheism by agnosticism. But not the less has it to confess itself baffled, and at last, along with Buddha and the Vedic poets, to erect its altar to the Unknown God.

And how is liberation to be attained? How are these eighty-four hundred thousand births to be cut short? It might seem that as there was a power beyond their ken which ultimately ordered all, it would be wiser for the philosophers to confess their own inability to discover what It had ordained as the final mode of escape. But the Brahmans have here a better foundation to go on than the Buddhists. They believe in a revelation, however

inconsistently, and on it they profess to build their method. The following, from one of their principal authorities,¹ expounds the way: "The recluse, pondering the teacher's words, 'Thou art the Supreme Being,' and receiving the text of the Vedas, 'I am God'; having thus in three several ways—by the teacher's precept, by the Word of God, by his own contemplation—persuaded himself 'I am God,' obtains liberation." This presents the most abstract conception of the Hindu way of salvation. Liberation is not to be attained by virtuous life, or by works of any kind. Bad works require to be punished and good ones to be rewarded. We must seek a higher end—deliverance from pleasure and from pain alike, and must look for it by nobler means—by being free from works altogether. Knowledge is the power which alone can free our spirit, and meditation is the means by which this knowledge is to be attained. To avoid all contact with the world, to avoid works, to meditate, with the help of the teacher and of the Vedic text, on the identity of the internal and the external spirit till their oneness be realised, is the Hindu philosophical answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" It is called the "way of knowledge," and is said to be the only infallible way.

Such is a brief outline of Hindu philosophy, and we may now look at the points of its answer to Buddhism. The following table contrasts the two systems:

¹ Sankaracharya in Bannerjea's *Hindu Philosophy*.

BUDDHISM.

Being includes the visible and invisible universe: the world, the heavens and the hells, and all therein.

Karma is the power that regulates our condition in these various states of existence, and necessitates our being re-born in them.

1st Verity.—Wherever there is Being there is suffering.

2nd Verity.—The desire of Being prevents its cessation.

3rd Verity.—The conquest of the desire of Being leads to Nirvan, and this to the cessation of Being or annihilation.

4th Verity.—The law of Buddha (self-denial and seeking the good of others) leads to the conquest of the desire of Being.

HINDUISM.

Being includes the Supreme Spirit alone.

Illusion includes the visible and invisible universe: the world, the heavens and the hells, and all therein.

Karma is the power that regulates our condition in these various states of existence.

Adrishta, the Unseen, is the power that necessitates our being re-born in these various states of existence.

Wherever there is pure Being there is joy.

Wherever there is Illusion there is suffering.

Delusion or ignorance prevents deliverance from Illusion.

Knowledge secures deliverance from illusion and absorption in the Supreme.

Study and meditation lead to the attainment of knowledge.

It will be seen from this table that Hinduism is a pantheistic protest against Buddhism. Its power is in the answer to the first Buddhist verity. In opposition to the utter pessimism of Buddhism, that wherever there is existence there is misery, and consequently that the only escape from misery is escape from existence, it opposes the optimism, that where there is normal or pure Being there is joy, and that when the spirit attains this state of

pure being, through deliverance from Illusion, it regains its birthright of a blissful though impersonal existence. Yet, after all, on this point ✓ the immortality of Hinduism differs little from the annihilation of Buddhism, for it is the annihilation of personal existence.

The weakness of Hinduism as opposed to Buddhism is seen in its opposition to the last article. It opposes to one of the highest principles of life a mere selfish effort to acquire knowledge. Buddhism is un-theistic, Hinduism is un-ethical. Each is wanting in the half of a perfect religion.

Had the Brahmans, in carrying out their principles, been as consistent as the Buddhists, it is probable that they too would have perished from Hindustan. But they united their teaching with the popular superstitions, and rallied the various tribes of India around them. And as practical results are the best test of any system, an examination of the practical developments of Hinduism, in society and religion, will enable us best to appreciate the value of its higher doctrines.

Before proceeding to this, one question remains to be answered—Is the account I have given of Hindu philosophy a description of the belief of all Hindus, or of the learned only? I have tried to state it as I have heard it explained by the most learned pundits, and the reader may imagine all the stages of acquaintance with it and belief in it down to the utmost ignorance. The following

tenets I have generally found to be held by all classes:—

The transmigration of souls is universally accepted. Every Hindu I have met with believes that he has previously inhabited other bodies, and that he must again tenant others after quitting his present one.

Karma is looked on as the power binding him to existence, binding him to his present condition, and even to his present acts. The Buddhist idea is the popular one, that of Hindu philosophy—the Unseen—being ignored by the common people, as negations usually are. If I were to translate Karma by fate instead of deeds, it would perhaps be more intelligible. But the European fatalist looks on himself as impelled by a power altogether external to himself, which, while it deprives him of liberty, excuses him from responsibility. The Hindu looks on himself as impelled by what he himself has done, as reaping the fruit of his own deeds, though not deeds of his present consciousness. Thus a dreadful sense of retribution and responsibility is superadded to that of helplessness, making it tenfold more gloomy and terrible. The full force of this can be understood only by one who has seen a Hindu under sentence of death for a heinous crime, and who to all appeals to his conscience can only reply by a stolid "*Karm.*" His crime and his punishment alike are the fruit of deeds done; he knows not when or where. How can he help himself?

Lastly, nearly all Hindus believe that their inner

self, that which passes from birth to birth, is the Deity. When I have asked a Hindu, Who is God? the answer I have generally received, from peasant as well as priest, is "*Jo bole*"—he who speaks. It is possible he may never have thought of the meaning of this answer, but it shows how deeply pantheism has penetrated Hindu thought, when even the most uneducated define the deity as that within them which gives them the power of thought and utterance. The same idea is shown in the words used by some castes in performing the last rites for the dead. As the body is borne along to the place of burning, the bearers and mourners unite in the chant:

"Ram, Ram sat hai;
Jo bole gat hai."

1 "Ram (God) is existent; he who speaks is past." This is their creed of immortality. The body dies and is burned; not so "he who speaks"; he has only passed on another step towards his final end. Hence the word **Gati** or passing—the final passing into God—is the popular word for liberation.

But when the question came to be, What were the multitude to do to attain liberation? the philosophical solution, the way of knowledge, quite failed. Every one could not become a recluse. It was opposed to human nature, and specially opposed to Brahmanical supremacy, as it involved the sinking of all caste distinctions. The Brahmins, therefore, left the various tribes and castes to seek

salvation in their own way, and sought rather to win them by showing how their various ways all conduced to the same end. Thus the various gods and demons, idols and fetiches, which the "twice born" had so long ignored, at last avenged themselves on them by debasing their high creed to the lowest idolatry and to the vilest worship; while at the same time the lowest order of Sudras obtained a recognition and a place in the caste system. This union of pantheism with caste and polytheism we have now to consider.

CHAPTER VI

PANTHEISM AND CASTE

THE great vitality of Hinduism lies in its institution of caste. I have already had occasion to refer to its origin in India.¹ We have seen that two elements went to its formation, distinctions of nationality, and distinctions of occupation. The Aryas, the conquerors, were distinguished from the Sudras, the tribes of India, whom they had conquered; and within the Aryas distinctions according to occupation arose, of priests or Brahmans, soldiers or Kshatriyas, and Vaisyas or traders. The same two basal distinctions continue to the present day. The common word for caste in India, *jati*, means properly tribe or race. Several of the modern castes are in fact tribes that have more recently been received into the Hindu system. But generally distinction of occupation is the most common mark of distinction of caste. Barbers form one caste, carpenters another, iron-founders a third, brassfounders a fourth, and so on. Some castes have a wider range of occupation. Brahmans may be priests or soldiers, beggars or teachers. Rajputs may be farmers or servants as

¹ See p. 30.

well as soldiers; but there are always some occupations which it is forbidden to the members of a caste to enter on.

So far caste has its analogies in Western civilisation, and we know how powerful such considerations are in dividing society. But in India it is organised on the strictest lines to preserve purity of caste by preserving purity of blood. The most obvious way to preserve this is by preventing intermarriage. Accordingly all the castes of India are endogamous; they marry only within themselves, beyond certain degrees of relationship, varying in different castes. This might be considered sufficient, but eating and drinking also affect the blood. Members of one caste must not therefore eat or drink with those of another caste—must not even eat food that has been cooked or touched by them; some consider their food polluted if one of another caste even comes near it while it is being cooked. Each caste has also its rules as to what food it may take, and these are observed with the most scrupulous exactness. In some cases personal contact is also considered polluting. Some of the lower castes are considered so unclean that contact even with their shadows is considered pollution; and in native States members of these castes are not allowed to enter cities, at morning or evening, when the sun is low and the shadows are long. It is no uncleanness, however, for those of lower castes to come into contact with those of a higher caste. All may eat food prepared by Brahmans and drink water from their vessels. One caste of Brahmans, the

Kulin, even take wives from lower castes, in which case the offspring are considered to belong to the mother's family; but Brahmans who do this generally marry one wife of their own caste to preserve it.

The full strength of caste cannot be understood, if we do not take into account the family system of the Hindus. Its tendency is to crush individuality. The Hindu child finds himself in a family consisting of grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts, and cousins to the second or third degree. His grandfather, or possibly his grandfather's elder brother, is the head of the family, and when he dies he is succeeded by his younger brother, or the eldest of the second generation. He finds that he has been betrothed before he could understand anything about it; or when he is seven or eight years old the head of the family chooses a wife for him, and the betrothal takes place with great rejoicings. When seventeen or eighteen, he brings his wife to his father's house, as his elder brothers have done before him, and a new branch is added to the family. Among his sisters is one to whom he may not give any present, and who may not wear any ornament. She was betrothed when an infant; her husband died when she was a few years old; she is now a widow, looked on as branded with a curse, and must continue the disgrace of her family till the day of her death. He hears of nothing but the affairs of his caste; he looks forward to no career but assisting his father and uncles in their trade or profession; and when he gains anything it does not belong to him indi-

vidually, but is thrown into the common income of the family. He performs religious ceremonies at his father's death, others a year later, and at least once thereafter he must go a pilgrimage to some sacred place to burn the *pind* or offering to his father's manes. As his grandfather, father, uncles, elder brothers, or father's elder brothers' sons die—for all these distinctions are attended to and marked by separate names among the Hindus—he floats on to the patriarchate of the family to look after the duties and marriages of the younger members. Thus throughout his whole life there is no room for any play of individuality. His whole course is marked out for him by the lines of inexorable custom; he cannot disentangle himself from family ties, much less break loose from caste fetters.

We have already seen how caste originated in early Aryan society, and how Buddha sought to overthrow it. But it had taken too deep root to be soon overthrown; and when the Brahmans began to regain their authority they turned Buddha's own doctrines, or rather their modification of them, into an argument in its favour. For, they say, just as a man's deeds in a former birth might have required his being born a god or a demon, a bird or a beast, so they have led to his being born a Brahman or a sweeper, a merchant or a thief. There is this disadvantage in being born a man, that, having freedom of judgment, he may leave the duties of his own caste for those of another; may quit his own caste

fellows and eat and drink with others. But so surely as he does this he is incurring some miserable birth in the future—he is forging a new link in the iron chain of his existence.

If a man is born a Brahman, for instance, the Hindus believe that it is on account of merit acquired in a previous birth. If a Brahman should quit his special duty, if he should seek to gain his food by manual labour rather than by begging, by trading rather than by teaching; if, above all, he should eat and drink with the lower castes, or teach the sacred books to the out-castes, he is leaving some of his merit not fully rewarded: he must undergo another birth in order to receive full recompense; and meanwhile he is committing a sin, which will involve a miserable birth to make expiation for it.

And as it was for themselves the Brahmans taught it was for every man. Whatever the condition in which he was born, it had been determined by his deeds in a previous existence. He could expiate them only by fulfilling the duties of that condition, but by fulfilling them aright he could gain a sure step towards final liberation. Thus the Brahmans no longer ignored the Sudras; they recognised them as bound by the same order of things, and as destined by observing that order to rise to an equal or superior place in future births. Two conditions only did the Brahmans impose on all who would enter the caste system: reverencing the Brahmans as a divine caste, and **reverencing the cow** as a sacred animal.

In many countries besides India the cow or the bull has been recognised as a sacred animal. We can imagine how, with a pastoral people, special value, and thereafter special sacredness, came to be attached to it. Ancient legends tell how the cow came to have first a symbolical sacredness, but for a long time this did not seem to imply any sacredness in the whole species. In the Vedas the cow is spoken of as the best of all food. In the chapter of Manu's Institutes relating to assault, the cow is classed with other large animals. "For killing a man (unintentionally) a fine equal to that for theft shall instantly be set—half that amount for large brute animals, as for a bull or cow, an elephant, a camel, or a horse." In a later chapter the cow occupies an intermediate position between man and other animals, and killing it is classed along with adultery as a sin of the third degree, to be expiated by a long and heavy penance. In it, too, we find the five products of the cow¹ prescribed as a means of ceremonial purification.

When once this start had been made, we can conceive how the idea grew. The Buddhist might oppose to the reverence which the Brahmans paid to the cow, the care which they took of all animals. The cow would thus come to be identified with the Brahmanical religion. At all events, in the temples erected to celebrate the triumph of Hinduism over

¹ Namely, milk, curds, butter, urine, and dung. These formed into a pill are swallowed by anyone who has forfeited his caste, as a means of purification and restoration.

Buddhism, a bull is represented as standing on a prostrate Buddha. In later days, when the Rajputs expelled the Mohammedans from Rajputana, the point on which the chronicler always dwells, when recording the triumph of a Hindu prince, is that he put a stop to the slaughter of kine. It is a crime which they now regard as worse than murder.

No one can be regarded as a good Hindu who does not thus reverence the cow; but by doing so he is regarded as entering the order of Caste. It would be difficult to name anything else that commands the consent of all. Some castes worship one god, some another, but all agree in holding the cow to be holy. It is the sacramental symbol of Hinduism in which sectaries of all shades unite.

Each tribe or trade among the Sudras was glad to accept this condition, and to have its respectability and importance in the social scale increased by being recognised as a distinct caste. This is what gives the Brahmans facilities in winning over aborigines, who are still outside the pale of Hinduism. Whenever they undertake the conversion of any tribe, the first lesson they teach them is that they must continue the practices of their tribe as sacred duties, to which they are bound by their previous births, attending further to those duties which are the result of their new position — worshipping the holy Brahman, and worshipping the holy cow. When these points

have been acceded to, they are raised out of the position of out-castes to be a caste, enforcing with all the zeal of neophytes the old customs and the new duties.

And so it has come to pass that, instead of the four original castes, we have now writers, carpenters, iron workers, brass workers, traders of various sorts, farmers of various sorts, and many tribes of no special occupation, too numerous to mention; each with its old customs, its rules of eating and drinking, marriage and social intercourse, erected into sacred duties. Many of the lower castes are now much greater sticklers for caste customs and privileges than are the Brahmans themselves.

Two consequences followed from this: the breaking up of the Brahmans into numerous sub-castes, which refuse to intermarry or eat and drink with one another; and the disappearance of the warrior and mercantile castes as such. Some of the mercantile castes do indeed claim to be descended from the old Vaisyas, and the Rajputs claim to be Kshatriyas; but the Brahmans refuse this claim, or allow it only when it is politic in them to do so. In Rajputana, where the Rajputs rule, they are acknowledged to be the second caste. On the other hand, the Kayaths, or writers, who do the principal business in the courts in the North-West Provinces, and who are therefore much more useful to the Brahmans there than the Rajputs, obtained some time ago a declaration from a Brahmanical college in Benares, that they are sprung from the warrior caste. But this does not imply any

restoration to those privileges of intercourse with the Brahmans, or intermarriage with them, that was allowed to the Kshatriyas by Manu. Hindu society may now be described as being divided into two great castes—the Brahmans or twice-born, who are worshipped as gods; and the once-born, who worship them, and who constitute the great mass of the people.

Enough has been said to show how pantheistic doctrine has been made to vindicate caste practice; and it may be conceived what an iron hold, backed by such sanctions, it has on the minds of the people. Accordingly, caste law has come, both theoretically and practically, to take the place of the moral law. We have seen how Hindu philosophy has developed itself entirely, independently of those moral considerations which form so important a part of both Buddhism and Jainism. It pretends to a position above both good and bad. But man must have some law of life, and the law of life which Hinduism gives, is obedience to caste practice. This is, of course, as varied as the number of castes. Each caste has its own code of morality. Max Müller, in an article in one of the reviews, started the question, Are the Hindus truthful? The answer that would be given by any one conversant with them is, It depends on the caste. Some castes of Brahmans are truthful, or pretend to be so; but Baniyas do not even make the pretence. A Hindu would as little expect Baniyas to speak truth as he would expect iron to swim; but, on the other hand, in written

transactions, in questions of exchange of money and such like, they have a very high code of morality. Some castes have a comparatively high standard for female chastity, with others it hardly exists at all. And not only do the members of the caste think themselves at liberty to disregard all laws of morality not enforced by caste practice, members of other castes think them religiously justified too. A Hindu of high caste, with whom I was once discussing the subject, maintained that a Thug was quite justified in committing murder and robbery, because it was the rule and practice of his caste. "When I meet a Thug," he said, "I would imprison him and put him to death if he has committed murder, as I would shoot a tiger if I met one. But the Thug is no more to be blamed for killing a man than a tiger is. He can escape from the obligations of his caste as little as a tiger can."

Even where laws of ordinary morality are recognised by a caste, they are subordinate to caste law. A Brahman may be guilty of theft, adultery, or murder, and he will yet be received without hesitation by his caste-fellows. But let him be guilty of eating and drinking with those of an inferior caste, let forbidden food but touch his lips, and he then becomes an out-caste, with whom it is pollution to have any intercourse. Caste, in some of its features, is in some parts of India being obliterated; but there are, I suspect, few Hindus who would not shun one of their own caste who had eaten with those of another caste, much more

than they would shun one who had been guilty of a heinous crime.

One other effect of caste I would notice before closing, the barrier it has raised between the English and the natives of India. It has absolutely prevented all social intercourse. Englishmen in this country often reproach their fellow-countrymen in India with the antagonism, the total want of sympathy, between them and the Hindus. It is a sad fact that such a feeling does exist, but it is the Hindus who are responsible for it. It is they who have made friendly social intercourse between the rulers and the ruled impossible. Owning the sway of the English, and acknowledging that it is a just one, they yet look down on them as unclean. It is the Hindu who looks on himself as polluted by the touch of an Englishman, who will throw away his food as unfit for use if an Englishman comes within a few feet of it; not the Englishman who looks on himself as polluted by the touch of the Hindu. This has, no doubt, reacted on the English, and produced in them a feeling of dislike and antagonism to the Hindus; but the original blame lies with the latter.

CHAPTER VII

PANTHEISM AND POLYTHEISM

WORSHIP of the cow is, we have seen, the common feature of all the Hindu castes; but as a rule it is not worshipped for the sake of temporal or spiritual benefits. The Hindus do not pray to it for deliverance from misfortune or for success in business, for future happy births or for final liberation. For these they look to their various gods. Each caste has its own special god, though its members are quite free to worship others. We have seen that Buddhism, owing to its atheism, has never been the sole religion of any people. During the time of its supremacy in India, the common people most probably resorted to the idols of their forefathers when they felt the need of worship. When the Brahmans tried to reconquer India, they allied their religion with these aboriginal deities which Buddhism had not availed to overthrow. They thus gained over their worshippers, and formed what may be termed more appropriately the Hindu than the Brahmanical religion, as it embraces elements to which all castes of Hindus have contributed.

We are thus brought face to face with the

countless gods of Hinduism. It may seem at first to be contradictory to the doctrine of there being but one Supreme Spirit that the worship of so many gods should be admitted, and that, if we are ourselves parts of that Spirit, we should worship other parts. But pantheism, though it cannot conquer fetichism any more than atheism can, may yet supply it with a philosophical basis. There is a complete logic running through the various parts of the Hindu system, never, indeed, formally expressed, but indefinitely present to the minds of its votaries, welding it into a consistent whole.

The relation of these popular deities to the Supreme may be understood by recurring to the image of water, which I used to illustrate the theory of transmigration.¹ A drop of water may be far away from the ocean, and it may be impossible for it to return thither directly. Nevertheless, if it fall into a stream, its own existence will, so to speak, be absorbed in that of the stream till it reaches the ocean. So, too, are we through our bondage to *maya* hopelessly far from the Supreme Spirit, and by no efforts of our own can we hope to overcome the separation. But these gods are, like the rivers, brought nearer to us. They, too, are under the power of *maya*, as we ourselves are. Hence they have desires and passions similar to ours; can be influenced by motives as we can; can be induced to grant temporal and spiritual blessings; can help us to be born in a happy state in our next birth; or, best of all, can grant us mediate liberation

¹ See p. 75.

by absorbing us into themselves. We then lose existence except as part of them; the burden of our merit or demerit is borne by them, and so we shall continue till the final cataclysm, when all shall be absorbed once more in the Supreme Spirit.

We thus see how pantheism supplies a basis for idolatrous worship. Buddhism taught that the gods were subject to the same laws as men, and, having no Supreme Spirit to which to refer them, forbade their worship; Hinduism, admitting the gods to be subject to the same laws as men, yet referring them to the Supreme Spirit, made them mediators leading to It. The Hindus thus quite consistently with their own system, while neglecting the worship of the Supreme, attach themselves to the worship of these inferior deities. Their very weaknesses and subjection to laws make worshipping them more reasonable than worshipping It; for they can be influenced by motives, while It can not, and can be brought under the power of their worshipper, though he may be weaker than they. This apparent contradiction, again, the Hindus explain by a simile. One man may be much more powerful than another, inasmuch as he may be much richer; but the poor man may go to him at night, and, putting a pistol to his breast, may force him to part with some of his riches. So the gods are more powerful than we are; but we, by certain acts of worship, may bring them under our control, and force them to grant whatever we desire.

Such principles as these gave the Brahmans facilities for adapting to their system the various

tribal gods and worships with which they came into contact. When they came on any idol worshipped by any tribe, they represented it as one of the many streams leading into the ocean of liberation, needing only to be worshipped in the way in which its devotees had been wont to worship it.

The worship paid to these gods is of two kinds, the way of **Devotion**¹ and the way of **Works**.² The two are not entirely independent of one another. They are like the two sides of the letter V, they unite at the foot. The way of devotion is connected mainly with **Idol Worship**. Nearly all the gods have images, through which they are worshipped. These images are mostly hideous caricatures of the human form. Whatever sense of beauty the Hindus may have shown in their architecture and its ornamentation, they have shown none in their representation of the deity. "All is hideous and grotesque and ignoble."³ There need be no representations of any form at all. "Stone worship" is as common a name for this cult as image worship, and many of the objects of worship are mere stones or rocks with a red daub on them. This form of idolatry does not seem to have belonged originally to Brahmanical worship, but to have been ingrafted on it from the worship of the aboriginal tribes or earlier settlers in India. It is also highly probable that the Buddhist practice of erecting images of Buddha and of Buddhist saints, may have given an impetus to such worship. However it may have originated, it now flourishes

¹ Bhakti mārṅa.

² Karma mārṅa.

³ Macaulay.

in India with the vigour of a strong life, and the Brahmans have come to be as degraded stone and image worshippers as any.

There are three views with regard to this worship prevalent in India. The first is the **Philosophical**, held by the educated and thinking few, that the image is an aid to meditation and devotion. We are apt, they say, to forget God; but when we see the stone it reminds us of Him; we meditate on Him, and invoke His name. A much more general view is the **Mystical** one: that according to the charm or *mantra* originally pronounced at the consecration of the idol, some particular deity is present in it; that the spirit of the god comes into the idol at the bidding of the Brahman; and that he knows and accepts what is offered to the idol as offered to himself. Lastly, there is the **Literal** view, held by the majority of the population, that the idol, by the Brahman's *mantra*, is itself made a god, and by its own power can do for its worshippers what they desire. Hence the Hindus, if their prayers are not answered, sometimes scourge their idols, or cast them out of their temples. Sometimes the priests exhibit them loaded with chains, and tell their devotees that their god is in debt, has been put in chains by his creditors, and so must remain till his debts are paid.

Each of the gods may have his temples and images in any part of India, but the more important of them have places specially sacred to them. These are called **Tirths**, or places of pilgrimage. The most noted of these is Benares on the Ganges,

the sacred city of Siva. The place is always there, but it is a *tirth* only when the god is present in it. In some he is supposed to be always present; in others, to be present only on certain days, and on these days great gatherings or fairs take place. On other days, when devotees visit them, they can secure the presence of the deity by pronouncing a *mantra*, either a more elaborate one through the Brahman, or a simpler one suited for a lower-caste man, but which will be equally efficacious, and secure the desired presence.

I have more than once referred to the **Mantra**. We have seen what this originally meant,¹ its high spiritual significance, and how it came to be degraded to a mere magic formula. It is in the latter sense that it is now always used in India. Many that are used are the hymns, or verses of the hymns, in the Rig Veda, repeated word for word, syllable for syllable, the same as it was originally uttered; but without the least idea that it has any, or ever had any, sense comprehensible by mortals. Others are more modern, and are in modern Sanscrit; but the power of the *mantra* is not supposed to rest in the sense, but in the sound. They are supposed to have power over the gods. Hence the saying common in India: The gods are subject to the *mantras*, and the *mantras* are subject to the Brahmans; therefore the Brahmans are our gods. But many sects hold that each worshipper is able at pleasure to enjoy the presence of his deity; and for this purpose, when he is initiated

¹ See Chapters I. and II.

into the sect, its peculiar *mantra* is taught him. This generally consists of a short Sanscrit form, meaning, "I salute Krishna," "I salute Narayan," or some other god. By repeating this at the beginning of any act of worship, they believe the presence of the god is secured as truly as in the idol. The philosophical explanation of this is that the act of invocation helps to concentrate the mind on God, and to enable the worshipper better to meditate on Him.

One of the most striking facts in modern Hinduism is, that in all acts of worship, sacrifice, which formed the centre of Vedic worship, is entirely absent. Offerings are indeed made to the idols, but they are not considered expiation for sin. They are looked on rather as food for the gods; they are allowed to remain before the idol long enough for it to be supposed to have consumed their essence, and then their apparent remnant is taken by the priest. Bloody offerings, sacrifices of goats and of buffaloes, are common in many parts of India; as were also sacrifices of children, till the British rule was firmly established. These are acts of fetish worship, more akin to the worship of some African tribes than of the early Aryas,—different alike in name and in purpose; bloody food, offered to satisfy a bloodthirsty deity, instead of symbols of the sins of the sacrificer being borne by another. They are found chiefly among the aboriginal tribes; the tendency of Hinduism is to suppress them, and where they have been incorporated into its worship they form one of its greatest stains.

Brahmanical sacrifice has disappeared from Hinduism as completely as Levitical sacrifice has disappeared from Judaism. This is one fruit of Buddhism that has remained.

Special forms of worship will be explained in connection with the different gods, when we come to treat of them. Meanwhile it may be stated that the way of devotion consists mainly in going regularly to the temple of the god, saluting the idol, and making some offering to it. One form of this worship, universal in India, is **Invocation**,¹ repeating the word **Rāma** as the name of the Supreme Spirit. This, it is said, aids meditation. We are apt to forget God, but by repeating His name we are kept in mind of Him. Such may have been the original meaning of this worship, but now power is supposed to dwell in the mere sound. Its repetition is supposed to impose an obligation on the god so invoked, in return for which he is bound to grant favours, as much as the merchant is bound to give goods in return for the money which he receives. The oftener the name is repeated, the greater the obligation on the part of the god becomes. Sincerity, even purpose and intelligence, are not necessary to make the invocation efficacious. A story is told of a Bhil, who, having unwittingly killed a Brahman, was told constantly to repeat the word *marā* (dead) as an expiation. He did so for years, and the transposition of the syllables, *marā marā*, formed the invocation **Rāma Rāma**, till at last Vishnu, hearing himself invoked, appeared to the man,

¹ Jap.

granted him enlightenment, and promised him liberation, on condition that he would write a book to promote his worship. The man then became a Brahman, and was known as Valmiki, the author of the Ramayana. Many such stories are told, and the idea has come to be fixed in the minds of the Hindus that the mere repetition of the name is sufficient. Hence they use it on almost all occasions—each sect to invoke its own god. They use it as a salutation on meeting; they use it as an exclamation of surprise. When not otherwise employed, they mechanically turn round their rosary¹ and mutter the name at each bead.

This system of invocation may also be said to be the foundation of the way of works. The repetition of the name comes to be a work. It is accompanied sometimes with great austerities and self-imposed hardships and tortures. Visiting the *tirths*, too, may become the worship of works, if it be undertaken in the spirit of penance and enhanced by added difficulties, such as measuring the road to the *tirth* by the length of the body. The pundits acknowledge both these ways of worship,—devotion and works,—and try to show that they both lead to the way of knowledge, the highest and only efficacious way. Especially does the way of works, by its constant invocation and mortification of the flesh, help that meditation by which enlightenment and knowledge of our identity with the Supreme is attained.

It is only by a more detailed examination of

¹ Mālā.

the principal gods of India that its nature and the nature of its worship can be understood. There are two great streams of worship in which religion has flowed since Buddhism, the worship of **Vishnu** and the worship of **Siva**, called also **Hari** and **Har**. The worshippers of the former are called **Vaishnavas**, and of the latter **Saivas**, and these two great parties include nearly all the Hindu sects. The former are distinguished by a **tilak** or frontal mark, consisting of three perpendicular lines joined at the foot; the latter by a frontal mark of three horizontal lines. There are also differences in the times of their fasts, the shape of their temples, and so forth. But such external distinctions do not account for the bitter antagonism that used to exist between the two, as is evident from their old books; and which even now occasionally breaks out between them, notwithstanding the reconciliation that has been effected, and the essential quietism of modern Hinduism. The cause for this must be looked for in the ideas which they respectively represent. They typify two opposite poles of religious thought which have always been found among men—the one, the Vaishnava, looking to God as the author of all good; the other, the Saiva, looking to man as by his own deeds attaining to the good he desires. The discussion thus corresponds to that between the upholders of free grace and of works, which, under the names of Augustinianism and Pelagianism, or of Calvinism and Arminianism, have divided the Christian Church. We know

what violent animosities have existed between these two parties in Christendom, even when they had a common object of worship; and we need not be surprised that when in India they were symbolised by different gods, a similar hostility should be found. As may be supposed, Vishnu worship is the way of devotion, and Siva worship the way of works. The distinction is not absolute between the two. The most strenuous upholder of the way of works yet looks on his works as being necessitated by *karma*. The most devoted follower of the way of devotion looks on his very faith and devotion as works by which he can command the favour of God—thought of as a good-natured deity. But these indicate the main principles of the two sects.

There seems little doubt that the worship of Vishnu was the older worship among the Aryan castes at all events. We find in it the continuity of the Vedic worship better preserved, and it has altogether a milder character than its rival. This mildness is seen in its relation to Buddhism. It admitted Buddha to its pantheon, as one of the incarnations of Vishnu. Saivism, on the other hand, attacked Buddhism with the vigour of a new faith and of a nearer relationship. It was the faith of the fire races of the Rajputs, whose arms finally made Hinduism triumphant throughout India. But the Saivas seem originally to have been opposed to the Vaishnavas as much as to the Buddhists. In the older books of the two sects we find the rival gods denounced: Vishnu banning Siva, and Siva banning Vishnu, each consigning

the worshippers of his rival to hell. The more popular arguments as to the superiority of the two deities did not turn on the deeper questions of their faith so much, as on traditional incidents. The Saivas preserve the tradition of Krishna—who is claimed by the Vaishnavas as an incarnation of their god—having worshipped Siva, and argue that the latter must therefore be the greater god. The Vaishnavas retort by telling how Siva was unable to protect a worshipper of his from the wrath of Krishna. These and similar legends we find bandied about in this theological warfare.

By degrees the controversy toned down. This may have been due to the necessity felt for triumph over their common enemies, the Buddhists; or it may have been the natural working out of the Vedanta philosophy. At all events, we find the principles of this philosophy invoked to effect a reconciliation: Siva and Vishnu are one; works are acts of devotion, and acts of devotion are works. Both gods were the same, adapted under different forms to receive different forms of worship according to the different temperaments of men. For popular purposes the union was symbolised by the heads of both gods, with that of **Brahmā** in the middle, being carved out of the same stone. This constitutes the **Trimurti** (threefold image), the popular Trinity of the Hindus. For the pundits this symbolises the rivals being united in the universal deity; the way of devotion and the way of works united in the way of knowledge. Popularly, Brahma is called the Creator, Vishnu

the preserver, and Siva the destroyer; they are also spoken of as past, present, and future. Brahma is thus in both ways made a thing of the past, and his worship has almost entirely disappeared from India. Each of these gods has his consort; that of Brahma is **Saraswati**, the goddess of learning; that of Vishnu, **Lakshmi**, the goddess of wealth; and that of Siva, **Pārvati**, the mountain goddess.

There has often been an analogy drawn between the Hindu and the Christian Trinity. But, except in the number three, there is no resemblance whatever. The conception of the Hindu Trinity is that of three gods and one person; that of the Christian, three persons and one God. The Hindu Trinity is a mere external, mechanical union; the Christian Trinity is a union springing out of the essential conception of God in His relation to man. In the Vedantic Trinity, as we have seen, there is a much closer analogy.¹ All that can be said is that the popular Hindu Trinity may possibly have been suggested by the Christian one. There is a chapter in the history of Hinduism that requires yet to be investigated, and that is the influence of early Christianity on it. We know that in the first ages of the Church the gospel was preached in India; and that it was not without effect, the existence of the Malabar Christians proves. This tells of a struggle of which other traces have passed away, but which, most probably, would produce some effect on Hindu thought. The first

¹ See p. 68.

notice we have of any attempt to set up the *trimurti* was in Bijayanagar in the beginning of the fifteenth century.¹

The *trimurti* was possibly an attempt to give greater popular unity to Hinduism under the pressure of the struggle with Mohammedanism. But the metaphysical basis on which the reconciliation of the sects was accomplished, shaped itself under the pressure of the struggle with Buddhism, and received its final form in the beginning of the thirteenth century. It was then that **Boppa Deva** wrote the **Bhāgavat Purāṇa**, which has had more influence on modern Hinduism than any other book. In it we find the pantheistic doctrine fully developed. Krishna, its hero, is represented as worshipping Siva, and acknowledging that they were both the same; while Siva is represented as acknowledging the superior power of Krishna. In it the various legends with regard to Vishnu have received their final form, and been explained and justified on those pantheistic bases that are now generally accepted in India. A short study of these legends, as well as of those connected with Siva, is necessary to enable us to understand the popular life of Hinduism.

The records of these are found in the **Purāṇas**, which may be translated "Antiquities." They constitute the real sacred literature of the great body of the Hindus; they embody their actual religious beliefs, and tell about the gods whom they presently worship. They profess to give an account

¹ Lassen, *Ind. Alt.*, vol. iv.

of the creation of the world, as being produced from Brahma, which they take as a name of Vishnu or Siva, and of its being re-absorbed into him at the final cataclysm. They give an account of the various stages of the world's history as they conceive it,¹ and the chief legends of Vishnu and Siva, according to the sect for which they are written.

¹ They represent the history of the world as running in four ages or *Yug*: the Jut Yug, the Treta Yug, the Dwapar Yug, and the Kali Yug, each worse than the one before. We are now in the Kali Yug. At the end of it there will be a great cataclysm closing the Kalpa or *Æon*.

CHAPTER VIII

VAISHNAVISM

IN Vishnu we find typified that form of religious thought which starts from God and considers Him the source of man's salvation,—that type of pantheistic thought which starts from the idea of God pervading all things. The pundits derive his name from a root signifying to pervade; but it has, with more probability, been traced to one meaning, to go forth. It may originally have been a name of the sun, and he was first worshipped as a sun-god. We have seen that he was an old Vedic god; and in him we can trace the continuity of the old Brahmanical religion in modern Hinduism. We find in his worship and the legends regarding him the influence of many cross currents of religious thought, such as tree and serpent worship and arkite typology, many adaptations of the faith and worship of the aboriginal races, and many appropriations of the great events in Hindu history. Vishnu presents the Hindu idea of God in history.

He is represented in his primary condition as resting in a state of blissful repose on the flood, supported by the great mundane serpent, which

raises above him its graceful, spreading hood. Sometimes it is represented as many-headed, and all the heads combine to form one large canopy above the sleeping god. Thus reposing, he is said to typify the Supreme Spirit, and it is possible that as some such conception the Brahmans originally adored him. But it had too little human sympathy to attract the common people to his worship. He is therefore represented as being occasionally roused out of his slumbers by the solicitations of gods and men, and moved to take an interest in the affairs of the world when something has gone wrong in them. Then he becomes incarnate, or rather, as the Hindu expression means, he takes a descent or **Avatār**. These *avatars* form the great features of the legends regarding him, and it is by means of them that his worship is linked to Hinduism. In them the analogy of man's life is applied to the divine life on earth. Thus, we Christians, believing that man is born but once on this earth, believe that God has become incarnate but once for man's salvation; the Hindus, believing that man is born many times, believe also that Vishnu has become incarnate many times. The Hindus have no idea of God becoming incarnate once for all to put away sin, and enable man to work out his own salvation. There is always something going wrong in the world, and for it the only remedy is a descent of the god. Then, as they believe that the spirit of man may enter animals also, they believe that Vishnu has become incarnate in animals. This gave the Brahmans great facilities in dealing with

aboriginal tribes, or with the worshippers of other gods, whom they sought to gain over. They simply represented this other god as an incarnation of Vishnu, and persuaded the worshippers that the higher view was that, in worshipping their god, they were worshipping Vishnu.

Vishnu's ten Avatars.—According to the general belief of the Hindus, Vishnu has descended to the earth ten times.

1. He became a **Fish** (*Matsya*) at the time of the universal Deluge, to rescue the sage Manu. This sage had, by his austerities, secured the favour of Brahma, who warned him of the coming catastrophe, and bade him build a boat, into which he should go with seven other sages, and with the seeds of all things. Vishnu plunged into the flood as a fish with a horn. To this horn a rope from the boat was attached, and he towed it to a high rock, to which it was made fast.

2. His second *avatar* was as a **Tortoise** (*Kurma*), to recover treasures that had been lost in the flood. He went to the bottom of the ocean of milk, made his back a pivot for the mountain Mandara. Round it the demons and gods twisted the great serpent Vasuki, and, standing at opposite sides, and pulling it backwards and forwards, made the mountain a churning stick, with which they churned from the ocean what was necessary to renew the earth.

3. His third *avatar* was as a **Boar** (*Varaha*). The earth had been dragged beneath the waters of the flood by a demon. Vishnu became a boar, plunged beneath the flood, and, after a conflict of

a thousand years, killed the demon and raised the earth on his tusks.

It will be observed that these three somewhat grotesque narratives all refer to a tradition of the Deluge. The first especially presents points of resemblance with the account in Genesis, and may quite possibly be a reminiscence of the same event, preserved by independent tradition, most likely derived from Babylonian sources. But how did the Hindu traditions take the form they did? Most probably because these animals were totems of tribes in India whom the Brahmans wished to attach to themselves. I have found among the Minas traces of fish and boar worship still existing, and it is probable that before Brahmanism spread they had a much greater hold of the people. We may look on the story of the first three *avatars* as designed to gain over some of the aboriginal tribes.

4. The same may be said of the fourth *avatar*, when Vishnu is represented as coming to the earth as a **Man-Tiger** (*Narsingh*), to destroy a demon king, Hiranya-kasipu, who had obtained a boon from Brahma that he should not be killed by a man or an animal. This was most probably a myth to secure the adherence of worshippers of an idol of this form.

5. The fifth descent, that of the **Dwarf** (*Vāmana*), is more definite in its origin than the preceding. It links the worship of Vishnu with the pre-Buddhistic worship of the sun, and with a worship in Southern India. The following is an outline of the myth:—A king, called Bali, had by his auster-

ities gained power over the gods, and at last performed a sacrifice so powerful that even Indra lost his sovereignty. The gods appealed to Vishnu to help them. He appeared before the king in the form of a dwarf, and asked him to grant him as much ground as he could cover in three paces. The king granted his request, whereupon the dwarf enlarged his body so as to fill all space; with one step he put his foot on the earth, with the second on the air, with the third on heaven, so that there was no place left for the king but Patāla, or hell. This myth is probably a later form of the myth of Vishnu's becoming a sacrifice, which we have seen was the earliest conception of his "descent."¹ In this form he appears as the destroyer of sacrifice rather than as a sacrifice itself; and that shows the revolution that had taken place in India with regard to the ideas of sacrifice. In later Hindu literature it is the enemies of the gods who are represented as thus gaining power and threatening their sovereignty, and it was thought more consistent with the divine character of Vishnu to gain his end by deception than by sacrifice—to make the former defeat the efficacy of the latter. The three steps have been variously explained, but the most obvious, and probably the original one, is the rise, the meridian, and the setting of the sun. The idea of the dwarf came from a worship in Southern India, where it still survives.

6. The sixth *avatar* was as **Parasu-Rama**, under which form Vishnu is said to have come to earth

¹ See p. 26.

to extirpate the power of the Kshatriyas and establish that of the Brahmans.¹ We here enter on clearly historical ground; we see hero worship being woven into Hinduism, and the desire of the Vaishnavas to represent all the great events of history as the work of their god. Parasu-Rama was the hero of the Brahmans, but it was not likely to be pleasing to any but them, and few, if any, traces of the worship of Vishnu under this form now exist.

7. The seventh *avatar* was as **Rāma Chandra**, whose name we have already met in history,¹ and whose deeds are recorded in the Ramayana. There is this peculiarity in this *avatar*, that the whole of Vishnu did not become incarnate in one person. Half of his substance became incarnate in Rama Chandra, a quarter in Lachman, his brother, and a quarter in **Sītā**, his wife. Rama is the type of manly virtues among the Hindus, and Sita the type of feminine grace and faithfulness. His character, though not altogether free from blemishes, is one of the noblest in history. It is accordingly to the worship of this incarnation of Vishnu that most reformers among the Vaishnavas have attached themselves; and under it he is still worshipped by many powerful sects, such as the Sītā Rāms and Ramāwats.

8. More important than any of these—the great feature, in fact, of the Brahmanical revival—was the eighth *avatar* as **Krishna**. As it shows all the force and all the vice of this movement, I will dwell on it more in detail. We have already

¹ See p. 33.

seen Krishna as the ally of the Pandavas in the great war recorded in the Mahabharata.¹ In the later additions to that poem he is spoken of as a divinity. Traditions about him were handed down among the Vaisya and other castes; these, with many accretions, had assumed a definite form, and his worship had taken hold on the popular imagination, when the Brahmans began to manipulate it for their own purposes. According to the popular story, he lived in his youth in Brindaban, a beautiful forest on the banks of the Jumna. He was brought up as the son of Nanda, a cowherd of the district. He was noted in his boyhood for roguery, theft, and falsehood. As he grew up he performed several feats of strength; among others, killing a bull by which he was attacked. He thereafter entered on a shameless course of debauchery with the wives and daughters of the herdsmen of the place,—the part of his history most often celebrated in story and in song. When he had grown up, he slew Kansa, king of Mathura, and ruled there for a time; but he was attacked by Jarāsandh, king of Magadh, and after a stout resistance obliged to flee. He led his tribe, the Yādavs, to the far west of India, and there founded the city of Dwārka. From there he aided the Pandavas, and became one of the most renowned warriors in India; his whole life being characterised by the greatest licentiousness. He was at last wounded by an arrow, which a Bhil shot at him by mistake, and died of the wound.

¹ See p. 34.

The whole story of Krishna is possibly as great a myth as the story of William Tell is believed by some to be. But, mythical or historical, it had laid as firm a hold on the minds of the Hindus as the story of Tell has on the minds of the Swiss, and been associated with a belief in his divinity. We may acquit the Brahmans of having invented it, for in many points it is opposed to their teaching; but they found it too deeply rooted in the popular faith for them to tamper with it. They therefore adopted it, and directed their pantheistic philosophy to justifying its most revolting extravagances. Krishna was represented as an incarnation of Vishnu, taking this incarnation to destroy Kansa, the tyrannical king of Mathura, a worshipper of Siva. To get over the difficulty of Krishna's having been born of low-caste parents, he was represented as a changeling. His real parents were said to be Vasudeva and Devaki, the former the rightful king of Mathura, dethroned by Kansa. Vasudeva is a name of Vishnu. The writing of the Bhāgavat Purana, the chief authority now for the worship of Krishna, is said to have been prompted by a desire on the part of the author, Boppa Deva, to establish the worship of Vasudeva. We may look, therefore, on these names as mythical, and as meaning that the worship of Vishnu had been superseded by that of Siva, and that Krishna re-established it. It is now, however, accepted as a substantial fact by the Hindus. Kansa is said to have been warned that the child of Devaki would destroy him. When the time of her

deliverance approached, she and her husband were by his orders manacled and confined in a tower surrounded by guards; but all in vain. When Krishna was born, the guard fell asleep, the manacles fell off; Vasudeva bore Krishna across the Jamna, whose waters dried up at the touch of Krishna's foot, to the house of Nanda, whose wife had just been delivered of a daughter. He changed the two children, and returned with the female infant to his prison. He and his wife were miraculously bound as before; the guards woke up, and informed Kansa that the child was born. He rushed in to destroy her, but she was carried up to heaven, and escaped his wrath.

This story may be taken as a purely Brahmanical invention. In the subsequent parts of the legend, Brahmanical influence is seen rather in the mystic explanation given of traditions which had taken too firm a hold of the people to be ignored. Once, when his mother had caught him stealing some cheese, and was about to whip him as he deserved, he is said to have opened his mouth and to have shown her the *maya* of the three worlds therein; whereby she became convinced that everything belonged to him, and that she could not question his right to take the cheese. The bull he killed — the hardest nut for the Brahmans to crack — is represented as having been a demon sent in that form to destroy him. The part of his story most shocking to the moral sense is that of his wholesale adultery with the *gopis*, the wives of the herdsmen of Brindaban.

In the Bhagavat Purana the justification is given : That these *gopis* were heavenly nymphs, who had come to earth to enjoy the society of God when he became incarnate ; that " he who moves within the *gopis*, their husbands, and indeed all embodied beings, is their ruler, who only in sport assumed a body on earth." In the popular version of the story, the following verse is quoted :

"The rosary vain, and vain to call Lord ! Lord ! by day
and night ;

If false the heart, then vain the show ; in truth doth
God delight."

This seems a noble sentiment, but as applied in the context it means that, if the heart be right, outward conduct matters nothing, and so there was nothing wrong in the conduct of the *gopis* and Krishna, as he was God, and they looked to nothing but his divinity. This shows what pantheism has done for Hinduism. The pundits allegorise, the people gloat over the plain narrative. The former, when challenged as to the character of their god, explain away and spiritualise all the licentious stories, till they say they derive edification from them ; the latter say plainly, He had the power, why should he not use it to please himself in any way he chose ?

This is by far the most popular incarnation of Vishnu, and indeed the most popular god of India. He is said to have become incarnate again, it would be difficult to say how often, in religious leaders who have secured some following. Images of him are more frequent than of any other god.

These generally represent him performing some of his feats, but some are adaptations of images that had become popular in certain districts. The best known of these is that of **Jaggahnāth**, in Orissa. It is a hideous idol—a black stump with a head upon it. It was probably an old idol revered in that part of the country, and when the worship of Krishna spread, it was adopted as one of his names (Lord of the World) and one of his representations; the difference between it and the others being accounted for by saying that his limbs had dropped off on account of his immorality!

9. Since Krishna, a ninth incarnation of Vishnu is said to have taken place as **Buddha**. Though it is explained as an incarnation meant to lure demons and bad men to destruction by leading them to despise the Vedas, it was probably introduced to reconcile the Buddhists, and to ascribe to Vishnu all the great movements that have taken place in India. There is a small sect of Buddha-Vaishnavas who worship Vishnu under the name of Pandurang.

10. One incarnation yet to come is looked for. The Vishnu Purana calls him **Kalkin**, and declares he will come at the close of the *Kali* age to destroy all the wicked, and to re-establish righteousness. The outlook for this *avatar* has a distinct effect on the mind of the Hindus. One very common explanation is that the English are this *avatar*. This I have found expressed in remote country districts where I believe no Englishman had gone before. It has also been expressed by educated natives,

who have taken it as showing that European supremacy in Asia is one of the permanent conditions of the world.¹ On the other hand, some believe that the English fear this tenth *avatar*. When vaccination was introduced into the Ajmer district, the report spread that it was a device of the English to discover the new *avatar*, who was to have white blood, and who, they feared, was to drive them from India.

These are the principal incarnations of Vishnu. The Bhagavas enumerates twenty-two, including sacrifice² and Rikhab.³ It evidently seeks to carry out more fully the idea that all religious movement in India has originated in Vishnu. He embodies the natural tendency to hero worship, and presents the Hindu conception of God in history. It will be seen that the conception is one of might, not in any way of holiness; and that the pantheistic philosophy has justified the wickedness of the supposed incarnations on grounds quite consistent with itself.

Vaishnava Worship.—As I have said, the Vaishnava worship is the “way of devotion.” As he is the sovereign source of power, his worshippers need only to acknowledge this. They go to his temples and make a presentation of “body, soul, and wealth”;⁴ but this with the majority is a mere form; it does not imply the renunciation of any gain, pleasure, or sin. A god who so pampered

¹ See *Lights and Shades of the East*.

² See pp. 58-62.

³ See p. 26.

⁴ Tan, man, dhan.

his own body on earth cannot ask anything very severe from his followers; a god who committed such sins as he did will not require any very strict renouncement of sin from his followers. Their main idea seems to be just paying to the idol the same respect as they would pay to the god if he were still incarnate as a prince on earth, and the temple were his palace. They therefore go every morning to the temple of the idol to pay their respects to him as they would to their rajahs or thakurs. In fact, the popular name for an image of Vishnu is Thakurji. They believe that as a prince is pleased with the appearance of his subjects at court, and will be ready then to grant their petitions; so is the idol pleased with the appearance of his worshippers in his temple, and is ready to grant their prayers. And as a subject, when he wants any great boon from his rajah, must make him and his ministers large presents; so, too, must they occasionally make large gifts to the idol and to its priests. Some idols are more specially worshipped on certain days, as kings have greater levees on their birthdays. Then pilgrims throng in crowds from all parts of India; the god is carried out in procession and exhibited to the attendant multitudes, who are taught to believe that a glimpse of it removes all sin. The most famed of these festivals is that of Jaggahnath in Orissa, whose identification with Krishna I have already noticed. At it the Hindus sacrifice something dearer to them than wealth—caste; for then all castes mingle promiscuously, and the worship

of the god is supposed to sanctify the breaking of caste rules. Formerly, devotees used to throw themselves before the wheels of the huge car on which the idol was mounted, to be crushed to death, assured that thereby they would attain union with him.

There are several sects of the Vaishnavas, and in some of them worship degenerates to the worst conceivable forms. This is especially the case with the **Vallabhachāryas**, a sect originating with Vallabhachāri, who lived in the fifteenth century, and claimed to be an incarnation of Krishna. They teach that the god is not present in the idol, but is incarnate in the priest or maharaja, and that it is to him that the consecration of body, soul, and wealth must be made. As the worshippers throng into the temple where the maharaja sits enthroned, guards stationed at the gates scourge with whips all who enter, that they may experience something of the anger of their god; and this is considered part of the consecration of the body. There are other details of the worship too revolting to be described. It was proved in an action for slander in the High Court of Bombay, brought by a maharaja against a native editor who had exposed the worship of his temple, that even the impure stories of their sacred books did not fully depict the vile licentiousness of the orgies sanctified with the name of worship. The worship of this sect is well termed by other sects in India, *Pushti Mārga*, the self-indulgent way.

Vaishnava Reformers.—On the other hand, the Vaishnavas have produced many reformers, both philosophical and religious. Foremost among these was **Rāmanūja**, who lived early in the twelfth century, and to whose influence subsequent reformers owe most of their impulse. He held the theistic doctrine of the personality of God, and of his distinction from the universe and from the human soul. He attacked the pantheism of the Vedānta with a dialectic power and moral tone such as few controversialists have attained. He denounced as blasphemous the doctrine of God's being active only when conditioned by *maya*, and maintained that all the conditions of sovereignty and activity were eternally God's. But he did not get quite clear of all pantheistic ideas. He maintained that at the final liberation souls were absorbed in God, but not unified with Him. His idea differs from that of the Vedantists as mechanical mixture differs from chemical mixture. His simile is, as milk, though mingled with water, does not become water, so neither do human souls, though absorbed in the Supreme by virtue of meditation, obtain identity with Him.

One of his successors, **Rāmananda**, modified this, and maintained that the Supreme Spirit might be both conditioned and unconditioned, becoming the latter out of love to his worshippers. The concrete form which this assumed was that God out of love to man became incarnate; and the incarnation to which he and his followers the Rāmanandis or Ramāwats attached themselves was that of Rama

Chandra. The most popular writer of his school, Tulsidās, author of a popular version of the Ramayana, expresses this in language that a Christian might almost use. The philosophical reform of this sect was accompanied with practical reform, which sought, among other things, loosening the restraints of caste, and spreading sacred knowledge in the vernacular, instead of the obsolete Sanscrit.

As they fell from their first zeal, other reforming sects sprang from them, some of them emulating in their self-denial the severest of the Saiva sects. But the Nemesis of their origin seems to have followed them all. Starting from the worship of a sensual god, they all tended to sink to his level. After a protest against religious corruption, which lasted for little more than the life of their founder, their worship sank into a formalism which opened the way for the very corruptions from which they had sought escape.

CHAPTER IX

SAIVISM

TURNING from the worship of Vishnu to that of **Siva**, or **Mahādeva**,¹ we find the opposite pole of pantheistic thought at work. Vaishnavism, considering that God pervades everything, has recognised him specially in the heroes of the nation; Saivism, considering our souls to be part of God, teaches us to seek to realise that union. The means by which it chiefly seeks to do so, is by mortifying the flesh, and so subduing the body. We have seen that the idea of the power of austerity entered early into the Indian religion; but it was after the rise of Buddhism that this stream of thought gained power in India, and it was possibly in seeking to combat Buddhism with its own weapons that the Brahmans were led to exalt the worship of Siva.

The name of Siva, which means gracious, does not occur in the Vedas, but as an epithet of the god **Rudra**,² with whom Siva was afterwards identified. This was the name of the god of the storm, and it explains a number of the attributes of Siva. The storm rushing down from the mountain led to

¹ Lit. Great God.

² See p. 5.

its being considered his abode; the mutterings of the thunder, prolonged by the echoes, might suggest his constant invocations on the mountain top; the irresistible stroke of the lightning might suggest the glance from his eye consuming those with whom he was wroth; the destructive fury of the storm explains his attribute as the god of destruction; the aspect of the plain after the storm has swept over it—a tinge of verdure clothing what was before a barren waste—may account for his being called the god of fertility and reproduction; whilst the effect of the storm in clearing the atmosphere, and bracing the frame, may explain the medical power attributed to him.

Such is the Vedic god with whom Siva is now identified, and so may we account for some of the attributes attached to the latter. But this is a comparatively recent identification. It is probable that as he is now generally conceived of in India, he was originally the god of some of the earlier inhabitants of that land whom the Aryan Brahmans sought to conciliate. It is probable that from them, too, the **Linga** has been introduced. This is a stone symbol of the powers of generation, and of the reproductive attributes of Siva. It occupies a prominent position in all his temples, and generally there is the image of a bull worshipping it.

The myths about Siva's first forcing Brahma and Vishnu to acknowledge his power,—too coarse to be repeated here,—point to the reluctant acknowledgment of his claims by the older sects. There is little human interest in the legends regarding him,

nothing to link him with the history of India. The popular conception of him is that of a mendicant who has gained, and who maintains, his power by austerities and invocations. In his images he is represented with his hand open, as if begging for alms: he is said to have gone about begging, riding on a bull, which is consequently considered the animal sacred to him. Stories of drunkenness, licentiousness, and ferocious cruelty are told about him; his vice differing from that of Krishna's very much as that of a half idiotic boor might differ from that of a prince. The conception of a man becoming a god through godlike, because most perfectly human, conduct, has no place in Saivism. The mendicant becomes a terrible god by becoming as unhuman as possible, and all the representations of Siva carry out this idea. He has a third eye in his forehead, with which he strikes dead those who offend him; his rosary is composed of human skulls, in which he is said to delight; serpents mingle with his hair and wreath round his neck. With such an aspect he is said to be sitting on **Kailas**, an unseen mountain among the Himalayas, turning his rosary and engaged in invocation, thereby constantly increasing his power. This power is not connected with any intellectual greatness or any power of will, and seems often to be not under his own control. One god is said to have once unwittingly offended him at his invocations; his anger was aroused, and a glance from his eye reduced the offender to ashes. When reproached for what he had done, he made up for

it by causing him to be born as Krishna. Once in a drunken fit he is said to have struck off the head of his son Ganesha ; and when reproached for it by his wife, he replaced it with the head of an elephant. One name by which he is known among the common people is the simple or half-witted lord.¹ Their idea seems to be that this simplicity makes it easier to cajole, and at the same time more dangerous to disturb him.

But the main feature in the conception of Siva is that he symbolises the results supposed to be attained by austerities and invocation. The very absence of inherent greatness in the god tends to exalt the principle which he represents. In conformity with this, the worship paid to him starts from the idea of getting power over him by similar austerities and invocation. It is therefore called the way of works, or the way of hardship.² Accordingly it is the *jogis* or ascetics who form the main strength of the Saiva sect. Some of these are men of real learning and power, who discard all the gross traditions with regard to their god, look on him as the representative of the Supreme Spirit, and endeavour by study and meditation to acquire such knowledge as shall enable them to realise their unity with him. **Sankarāchārya**, perhaps the greatest master of the Vedānta philosophy, belonged to the Saivas. Among them, too, especially among the **Dāndi** sect, are to be found in the present day its most strenuous supporters, and the most zealous reformers on a purely Hindu

¹ Bholā Nāth.

² Kashti Mārga.

basis. But in general it is a mere mortification of the flesh, a mere unhumanising of the man, that is looked to as a means of attaining power.

A story is told of one ascetic who for a thousand years continued standing on the tiptoe of his left foot. The first hundred years he lived on fruits, the second on withered leaves, the third on water, and the remaining seven hundred on air. At the end of this period Siva appeared to him, and granted him all the boons he desired.

There is a local tradition at Pushkar, that at a spot not far off there dwelt a celebrated recluse called Mankan. Some Brahmans went one day to visit him, and one of them cut his finger with some coarse grass, when instead of blood a green fluid came out. Seeing such an evidence of the power of his devotion, he began to dance with joy and pride, till Siva, to humble him, went and opened his own finger before him, when a stream of white ashes came out. Mankan, seeing the proof of a devotion so much more powerful than his own, became silent and worshipped him. Then, after obtaining the promise of certain blessings for all who should make a pilgrimage to his hermitage, Mankan became absorbed in Siva.

This legend points to an idea held by others besides Hindu recluses, that the source of corruption is in the blood, and if it can be dried up the passions will be subdued. Among present ascetics, however, we find little more than a mere symbolism of ancient ideas. They do succeed in making themselves as unlike men as men can be, though whether

that be a sublimation or a degradation of their nature depends on the point of view from which they are looked at. The body is covered with ashes, to signify the drying up of the blood, the scorching out of the passions. It is sometimes further mortified by self-inflicted tortures. One arm is held straight up till it stiffens and cannot be bent again; the hand is clenched, and the nails allowed to grow through the flesh. Sometimes a vow of silence for twelve years is taken. Some of these *jogis* live alone in woods or caves; more frequently they wander from shrine to shrine of Siva's. Some classes of these recluses—and there are as many classes of them as there are of monks and friars—are more exclusive as to the castes from which they admit members into their fraternity. But men of any caste will find some one of these orders which they may join, and a short conversation with any of them will usually reveal the utterly sordid and selfish soul that exists beneath these outer disguises and self-inflicted tortures. Many proverbs and rhymes are current among the common people, satirising these *jogis* for their sordid or cowardly motives in becoming such, and for their gluttony and rapacity since they assumed the profession. But withal they fear them, dread their curse, supply them with what they want, and even worship them. They often ask through them for favours from Siva, believing that in some way their austerities have brought him under obligation to them.

These form the mainstay of the Saiva sect; but

they have also a large lay following among various castes and tribes, whose idols they have connected with Siva. The Vaishnavas, we have seen, represented the deified heroes of India as successive incarnations of their god, thus utilising the doctrine of transmigration. The Saivas, on the other hand, took up the deities worshipped by the various tribes, and represented them as being manifestations or servants of Siva. Their system consequently does not present the same unity as that of their rivals: there are no broad lines by which to mark their working, and we have to gather together disjointed legends in every district of India to learn how they propagated their faith. In some cases their course of action is plain enough. Siva is said to be married to a goddess named **Pārvati**, which means "daughter of the mountain." But a goddess may have more than one name. So **Devī**, who was worshipped by the Rajputs, **Mātā**, a goddess of some of the hill tribes, **Durga** and **Kālī**, Bengal deities, were all identified with Parvati the wife of Siva. These were all more or less sanguinary, and had thus an affinity with the savage Siva.

One of the most popular gods in India is Ganesh or Ganpati, which means "lord of hosts." It is generally believed that this means evil hosts; and his worship is a sort of blackmail to keep them from doing harm. He is also the god of learning. His image is in all native schools, and at the beginning of most native books,—whether, as sometimes explained, to propitiate him not to annoy the scholars, or to ask his aid as "lord of the host of

letters," is not settled. At all events, he is universally invoked over India, and the Saivas have secured his worshippers by representing him as a son of Siva. Again, the favourite deities of many of the agricultural castes were **Bhairon** and **Khetrapāl**. These were allowed to remain and to be worshipped as of old, taking the position of attendants on Siva. The Hindus have a saying that if anyone wishes to get a hearing of a ruler, the surest way is to tip his servants. So the farmers believe that the best way to secure Siva's protection for their fields is to worship his two attendants. Another point to be noticed is that the priests in many of the temples of these gods are not Brahmans, but members of other castes; they not seeming to have cared to disturb the old arrangements for worship among those whom they proselytised, if they only acknowledged their supremacy.

But it is only when we begin to examine the history of each old shrine that we find with what marvellous ingenuity the Brahmans have made themselves "all things to all men." Of this I will give one or two examples that have come under my own observation.

About six miles from Ajmer is a lake and town of the name of **Pushkar**. It is a *tirth*, and one of the most holy in India. In the traditions and rites connected with it we can see different stages of religion and worship fossilised. We see first of all the original inhabitants with their tree and serpent worship. Then came the **Gujars**, a pastoral

tribe, with a goddess **Gaitri**, who seem to have been the first, as they are still the most devout, believers in the efficacy of Pushkar. Then came the Brahmans, at a time when Brahma was still their god. They seem to have made it a place of sacrifice, and to have represented Brahma as having offered there a great sacrifice. The adherence of the Gujars to their faith they symbolised by a myth that Brahma, in the absence of his wife Savitri, had been obliged to espouse Gaitri to accomplish the sacrifice. They accounted for the serpent worship by a myth of a Brahman having been by the curse of another changed into a serpent during the sacrifice, and having been solaced by Brahma with the assurance that divine honours would be paid to him. Pushkar is now the only *tirth* in India sacred to Brahma.

Lastly came the Saivas. They found the legends of Brahma too deeply rooted to be ignored or displaced; so they recast the story, representing Brahma as asking permission from Siva to offer the sacrifice, and frequently admitting his supremacy during its course. They also identified Siva with some of the most popular objects of worship in Pushkar and the neighbourhood. The cell of a holy man called Atmat—the wanderer—had been an object of superstitious reverence. He was represented as a servant of Siva, absorbed into him during the sacrifice. The name of **Atamteshwar**, lord of Atmat, was given to Siva. A handsome Saiva temple is now erected over the hermit's cell. Again, at a place not far from Pushkar, there is a

rock with a great mark on it resembling that of a goat's foot, where people had been accustomed to go to worship once a year. The Saivas laid hold on this and represented the goat, whose hoofprint was on the rock, as a form into which Siva had transformed himself in order to kill a demon. They also represented him as promising to leave his Himalayan home for that rock one day each year; the day, of course, being that consecrated by popular usage.

It will be seen that the whole object of the Saivas was to assimilate, not to eradicate, ancient usages. They seem to have been as compliant with regard to the moral practices of those whom they proselytised. In the "Lay of Pushkar" the Gujars are represented as being the most loose living of men, and the women especially are spoken of in the coarsest of language; but their admission as such seems to be looked on rather as an evidence of the comprehensiveness of the Brahmanical religion. As they were then, so they are now after centuries of Brahmanical supremacy.

To the south-east of Ajmer is a district inhabited by a tribe called the Parihār Minās. An incident in the history of one of their progenitors, according to their present tradition, has led them to look on the boar as a sacred animal, though this may be a relic of boar worship. When the Mohammedans came to India, the Minas seem to have confounded their looking on the boar as an unclean animal with their own regard for it as a sacred animal,

and to have been induced in some degree to conform to their faith. Their old idol they continued to worship, giving it the Mohammedan name of **Adam Bāba** (Father Adam). Subsequently the Saiva Brahmans got hold of them. They did not try to persuade them to give up the worship of Adam Baba or of the boar, but simply to allow that Adam Baba was a name of Siva, and to worship the cow as well as the boar. Stones were erected in the temples of their principal villages, bearing representations of Siva as Adam Baba, of a cow, and of a boar, with an inscription to the effect that the Mohammedans respected the boar and the Hindus the cow, but the true followers of Adam Baba respected both; and if they neglected the worship of any one of them the worship of the other two would be of no effect. In some of the Saiva temples of the district I heard the Brahmans invoke Mahādeva, and the Minas Adam Baba.

Here, too, Brahmanical influence has been to strengthen evil. It was an old custom of the Parihars to kill many of their female infants, to avoid the expense of their marriage. One of them, more instructed in priestly lore than some of the others, told me that they had got divine sanction for the custom; that at the time that the religion of the Parihars was settled, Adam Baba was so pleased that he gave them the promise that their sons should be as numerous as the hairs on their bodies; and as the divine blessing is generally bestowed through means, he gave them permission to kill their infant daughters, so that the mothers,

being relieved from their nursing, might be sooner able to bear sons. Thus, instead of trying to eradicate a bad custom, the Brahmans gave it a divine sanction. When the English tried to put down female infanticide in the district, the strongest objection they met was the command of Adam Baba.

These are specimens of how the Saivas have gone to work. If the traditions throughout India about Siva and his subordinates were examined, they would probably be found to be adaptations of older objects of worship.

In nearly all such cases, too, the old form of worship is maintained. It is almost exclusively among Saiva sects that sacrifices of blood are offered. This is accounted for by saying that the god delights in drinking blood and in wearing skulls; thus his worship was accommodated to the demon worship of many of the aboriginal tribes. It is more generally, however, his spouse, under her different names, who is thus honoured. As Mātā, or Devī, she is still worshipped with the sacrifice of goat and buffaloes; as Kālī she was formerly worshipped by children being sacrificed to her. As worshippers of her, the Thugs, whose religion was robbery and murder, were included in the Hindu system; her command and example were cited to make *sati*, the immolation of a widow on the funeral pyre of her husband, a religious act. It is chiefly through the worship of these goddesses, and such subordinate gods as Bhairon and Khetrpāl, that Siva worship maintains

its hold on the populace. His own temples are deserted throughout the year except on the occasion of festivals, and then they are thronged chiefly with devotees.

One of the worst developments of Saivism is the rise of the **Bahm Mārgas**, "left-handed" or secret sects. These are sects that meet in private, when all rules of caste are for the time set aside, and all eat and drink together; when they meet again in public, caste rules resume their sway. In some cases this may be only a way of getting relief from the tyranny of caste; but in many, if not the majority, of these sects, rules of morality share the same fate as the rules of caste. In these sects the worship of Siva himself is not observed: the worshipper of that god is supposed to be able to resist all incitements to passion. It is in the worship of his female counterpart, his wife under one of her various names, that provision is made in Saivism for licentious worship of the worst kind. The holy books of these sects are the **Tantras**, books composed on somewhat the same lines as the Puranas, but much later. They teach a religion of works, but the works they inculcate are violations of the laws of sobriety, decency, and truth. The religion of works and hardship leads to as low an abyss as the religion of devotion and ease.

We may now review the work that Hinduism has done for India. The Brahmanical revival con-

quered Buddhism by laying hold on the need which man feels for a higher power, and of all the means of access to that power which the people of India had imagined, and adapting them to its own end. It took the gods as they were, with all their imperfection and wickedness, and sought to identify them with that universal Spirit, or parts of that Spirit, which it conceives of as the one existence. Pantheism logically requires that good should be correlated with evil; Indian pantheism avowedly does so. Human passion leads man to attribute to the object of his worship the same vices as he himself has. When these two principles meet they confirm one another: pantheism justifies the sinful idol, while it nails pantheism down to the practical application of its own principles. Hence, in the Hindu conception of deity, holiness is non-essential; evil may also proceed from him, and in the popular idols power is all that is needed. That granted, they may be patrons of virtue or monsters of vice; the deity can include both. This is a taint from which Hinduism has never been able to free itself. It has escaped in some instances, as in Ramanuja and Ramananda, from absolute pantheism. But even Tulsidas, the most popular disciple of the latter, says, "I salute everything good, and I salute everything evil."

The Hindus often complain of the intolerance of Christianity, and contrast it with the tolerance of Hinduism. And truly it would be difficult to get a wider tolerance than is expressed in this line. But this very breadth deprives it of all power for good

—makes the good powerless to repress the evil. This is the fatal effect of Hinduism. It does not exclude the good, but it denies its exclusive claim. There are in the Hindu books passages of unsurpassed beauty and purity which might find a place in the loftiest theism. But these passages can exert little influence on the lives of those who read them, when they are found alongside of others as vile as these are noble. Nay more, they positively hinder the spread of a pure religion. When the teaching of Christ, for instance, is presented to the Hindus, they recognise many of His sayings as very like some they have heard from their own books. But they have also been accustomed to hear them along with other teaching as different from them as night from day, and in connection with the worship of beings whose whole history contradicted them; and so feel no obligation to own their authority.

Corresponding with this is the principle of the human mind to which Hinduism appeals. Hindu philosophy, we have seen, makes knowledge the great instrument of salvation. Hindu popular religion puts blind faith in its place. "Faith is the great thing," is an axiom that comes naturally to the mouth of a Hindu whenever matters of religion are discussed. Faith in the object of your faith, whatever that may be, is considered the sure way of salvation. No matter how morally bad, no matter how utterly contemptible, that in which you believe, have faith in it, and you will gain your end. Have faith in your idol, have faith in your works, and all will be well.

Thus has Hinduism spread through India, not as a reformation, but as a 'conservation. It has taken advantage of all existing superstitions, however gross, immoral, and criminal, and, supplying them with a philosophical basis, has crystallised each into a hardness, and given to the whole a solidarity, which makes it now doubly difficult to deal with any one of them. It has recognised and vindicated the distinctions of class and tribe, freezing all together instead of fusing all together; making different classes live together in the same village with fewer common interests than the French and Germans; making patriotism an unknown thing, nationality an impossibility for the Hindus, till Hinduism be swept from Hindustan. The only thing to be said for it is that it has conserved good as well as evil. The law of caste is more binding than that of conscience, and where the original custom of a caste has been good, it has been preserved. Many who would not refuse to commit an evil because it was forbidden by God, would refuse because it was forbidden by their caste. The restraints of caste have checked the spread of many vices through some classes of society, have enabled them to look on a vice indulged in by others, and excuse them for it as being allowed by their caste, without feeling tempted to indulge in it themselves. It has also, when applied to trade and handicraft, begotten an independence of mere money-making, which is not to be found in other lands. This has given a certain stamina to the Hindus, which

we do not find in other idolaters. But the same thing that checks change for evil checks also change for good. Change is the one point on which Hinduism is intolerant. Let anyone ask a Hindu, who has been dilating on the intolerance of Christianity and the tolerance of Hinduism, to sanction one of his caste fellows carrying out change of faith by change of conduct, acknowledging the brotherhood of man by eating with those of other castes, and he will find that he has roused an intolerance as unbending and bitter as that of the Spanish Inquisition. Hinduism is essentially a quiescent religion, but it was not to be left undisturbed in its hold on India; and we have now to look at other faiths which came to contest its supremacy.

CHAPTER X

MOHAMMEDANISM IN INDIA

THE first hostile faith which Hinduism had to meet after its triumph over Buddhism was Mohammedanism; and the story of the conflict is one of the most interesting and instructive chapters in the history of religion. But as the object of our study is rather the relation of Hinduism to Christianity, I will not dwell long on it.

Mohammedanism took its rise from the preaching of Mohammed, in Arabia, in the beginning of the sixth century. It was a strong monotheism, and its brief creed was, "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is the prophet of God." Its founder was acquainted to a certain extent with the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, and acknowledged them as inspired; but he maintained the superior authority of the Koran, which he was commissioned to impart to the world. He allowed that Moses and Jesus were prophets sent by God; but he himself was the last and greatest, and superseded all who had come before. He had in his travels as a young man come in contact with various sects of Christians, noticed the quarrels that were taking place among them, and the almost

material interpretation that was given to the doctrine of the Trinity; and he denounced that doctrine as an abomination. He likewise denounced not only image worship, but even the making of images, though he was obliged to give way to the old Arab superstition of worshipping the Kiblah at Mecca. Salvation, he taught, was to be obtained by repeating the above creed, by praying five times daily, by performing appointed ablutions, by fasting in the month Rāmzān from sunrise to sunset, by giving a fortieth of one's goods in charity, by making the pilgrimage to Mecca; above all, by dying in war for the faith. The morality he inculcated was loose, but it was an improvement on that of the Arabs. He forbade the use of wine; and if he sanctioned polygamy and concubinage, he yet restrained the licence in which the Arabs had been wont to live. He, however, did not apply this legislation in his own case; and the licence which he allowed himself on the plea of his being the prophet of Allah, is the strongest refutation of his claim to be a prophet of the true God. The great merit of his creed and its great power is its strong assertion of the Unity of God.

At first the progress of his religion was slow, and it was not till Mohammed had recourse to the sword, not till the charms of military enthusiasm and political ascendancy were added to those of poetry and eloquence, that his religion became a power in the world. Then it spread with lightning speed. The Arabs, brought for the first time into

the community of nations, and fired by religious enthusiasm, were everywhere victorious. We must not make the mistake of supposing that the sword was made the means of propagating the Mohammedan faith. It was made the means of spreading the political power of the Mohammedans. When a country was conquered, the people were left in undisturbed exercise of their religion, unless that included the worship of idols, in which case the conquerors thought themselves free to destroy these objects of worship. All that they exacted was a poll tax on those who were not Mohammedans; and as they were also exempted from military service, the burden was not so heavy. In the earlier history of Mohammedanism some Christian nations and sects sought protection under its sway from the persecutions of fellow-Christians. This political ascendancy prepared the way for the preaching of the Mohammedan faith, which soon became almost universal in the lands which it had conquered. We must always remember that it was its monotheistic creed which nerved it to wield the sword, which conquered some of its own conquerors, and which is now winning to its standard many of the savage tribes of Africa and low castes of India.

Shortly after the death of Mohammed, his followers began to make incursions into India, and more serious attempts at conquest were afterwards made, but they were successfully resisted by the Hindus. It was not till the beginning of the eleventh century that the celebrated Mahmud of

Ghazni invaded India twelve times, and was everywhere victorious, compelling the native princes to submit, or driving them from their thrones. He left traces of his progress in the idols he broke and the temples he plundered. But his career was like that of the hurricane; he left no mark in India but that of a terrible name. Within fifteen years after his death the Hindus had driven his successors beyond the Sutlej, and for a hundred and fifty years longer India remained *Arya vartta*, the land of the Aryas. It was not till the end of the twelfth century that the victories of Mohammed Ghori established Mohammedan supremacy in India.

Thus, while the Mohammedan power spread with unmatched rapidity over Syria and Persia, over the north of Africa and into Spain, it for six hundred years failed to overcome the compact resistance offered by India. The reason for this is not far to seek. In the lands where it first spread, Christianity had conquered the old faiths, and had in its turn been so much contaminated by them, that its pristine vigour had decayed. It inspired its followers neither with the tenacity of an ancient faith nor with the enthusiasm of a new one, so that they succumbed easily to the fresh vigour of Islam. In India, on the other hand, Hinduism had just triumphed over Buddhism under the Brahmanical revival, and had expelled it from India. The Hindus were thus attached to their faith with all the strength which pride in its antiquity and enthusiasm on account of its fresh triumphs could inspire. When a capable head arose to combine

the various States and give direction to their valour, they proved too strong even for the fanaticism of Islam.

What, then, were the causes that led to the triumph of Mohammedanism and the political overthrow of Hinduism? On the one hand, Mohammedanism had won those warlike tribes in Central Asia, whence all successful invasions of India have started. The invasions of Mahmud of Ghazni had shown what they could accomplish, and it only required political to be united with military genius to effect a permanent conquest. On the other hand, not only was India divided into different States, often at war with one another, but the same causes were at work then which now enable a handful of Europeans to hold that continent. Society was broken up into castes, which prevented in any of the States anything like national solidarity. The warrior caste ruled and fought, and the Brahmans prayed and meditated; but the peasants tilled their fields, the merchants traded, the various craftsmen followed their crafts, without feeling themselves called on to strike a blow in defence of their country. They might prefer one government to another, but so long as their caste was not interfered with by change of rulers, they felt no call to bestir themselves.

It was towards the close of the twelfth century that these causes combined to give Mohammedanism a permanent hold of India. The two principal States of North India, Delhi and Kanauj, had exhausted themselves in a war for supremacy,

which left them both a prey to Mohammed Ghori. In a few years he conquered all North India, and established the military supremacy of his faith in that part of the continent.

But though the Mohammedans had triumphed, Mohammedanism had not. Two buildings raised by Ghori are typical of the work he did—the mosque in the *Lal Koti*¹ at Delhi, and that of the *Arhāi dīn kā Jhomprā*² at Ajmer. Both of these mosques are built of the ruins of Hindu temples. In each there is a splendid front of red sandstone, with five arches adorned with nothing but verses of the Koran. Behind it the roof of the mosque is supported on pillars taken from Hindu temples, with the carvings of the Hindu gods and their legends still upon them. These mosques are evidently the work of a man of strong religious faith, who wished to raise in stone a monument of the triumph of his creed over the idolatrous creed which it had conquered, and to show how much more effective the words of his holy book were as architectural ornament than all the images of the Hindus. But they are symbols of what the Mohammedan empire in India became—an imposing front of Mohammedan power, which the world saw, behind which remained the gods of Hinduism untouched.

The first zeal of the Mohammedan had so far

¹ The red fort.

² “Two and a half day hut”; so called, according to some, because it was reared in two and a half days; according to others, because two and half days’ revenue was devoted to it.

abated that they left to the Hindus their idols, provided they paid the poll tax; and this the Hindus were content to pay where they could not throw off the yoke of their oppressor. The struggle between the two continued with varying success, till the genius of Akbar established the Mohammedan dominion on a secure basis about 1560 A.D.

This basis consisted in depriving Mohammedanism of its political privileges. He abolished the tax on infidels, and thus made all his subjects equal in the eye of the law, in so far as their creeds were concerned. He had no very firm religious belief himself, and he set himself, with the indifference of a philosopher and the zeal of a politician, to assimilate the religious beliefs of his subjects. He made one of those attempts which have been made from time to time to form an eclectic religion, which is to combine the excellences of all, and ends by finding acceptance with none. Akbar was not more successful than others who have made similar attempts, but he was more successful in mitigating the religious animosities of his subjects. While indifferent to the special claims of Mohammed, he fostered the lower forms of his religion, and especially the worship of saints,—a corruption that had long been gaining ground in Islam. The tombs of saints all over the country were sought out, mosques erected over them, and pilgrimages to them organised. This policy was so far successful that the Hindus did begin to worship many of these saints, and to unite with the Mohammedans in paying them reverence on occasion of their

festivals. The political result, too, was gained, in so far as the stability of his own throne was concerned, both creeds uniting to support it. But the effect on Mohammedanism itself was disastrous. It deprived the religious sentiment among its followers of that intolerance which constituted its strength.

Yet this policy preserved the Mogul empire in its integrity for upwards of a hundred years, till the policy of intolerance revived in Aurungzeb. He reimposed the poll tax on infidels, and so branded all his Hindu subjects with inferiority on account of their religious beliefs. This alienated them, and ultimately drove them into rebellion. He decreed the destruction of idols, and the Rānā of Mewar offered "the heads of one hundred thousand Rajputs" for the defence of one of these idols, thus making it the symbol of Hindu nationality. The rebellion often seemed crushed, but it maintained itself with the vitality which only a struggle for religion could inspire, and imparted in turn a vitality to that religion which only sacrifice and suffering could beget. The Hindus were driven to emulate the intolerance of their opponents,—shaving the *kazis*, destroying the mosques, throwing the Korans into wells, and forbidding the call to prayer wherever they had power. When Aurungzeb, the ablest of the Moguls, died in 1707, he saw the empire breaking up on every side. About thirty years later it received its deathblow from another Mohammedan power, the Persians, under Nadir Shah. Thereafter the Hindu States either assumed

their old independence or established new dominions; while the Mogul emperor, still their nominal head, became more and more a mere puppet in their hands. The English conquests at the beginning of the nineteenth century rescued the empire from utter destruction, and gave the emperors a further lease of existence as vassals of Great Britain. But the part which the last of them took in the Mutiny of 1857 led to his being deposed and sent to end his days in a penal settlement. Thereby the political preponderance of Mohammedanism was crushed, and for a time it seemed as though the Mohammedan population was to sink into social as well as political insignificance.

It must not be supposed that Mohammedanism accepted this position without a struggle. It has had its outbreak of *Mahdism*, which for a generation it required all the power, first of the Sikh and then of the English Government to deal with. The *Mahdi* himself was not on this occasion a man of great power of leadership. But some strong men took advantage of his claims, as his Ministers while he was alive, and as his caliphs after his death, to rouse the faithful of Islam to fight the *Kafirs* or infidels. Their usual plan of action was to proclaim a *jihād*, or holy war; they summoned all who could fight to repair to the Himalayan frontier, there to join Mussulman tribes who had preserved their independence, and to invade the territory ruled by the infidel. They began this system against the Sikh kingdom, and after its conquest by the English they continued it against the English Government.

The Mohammedans throughout India, especially in Bengal, were compelled to pay a tax to these caliphs, under the threat of religious penalties; and for some time it came in with as much regularity as the taxes paid to the English Government. At the same time as many as could go were requisitioned for the holy war, and to that war nearly every Mohammedan village sent its quota of *shāhids* or martyrs. Their action was spasmodic, but at least two serious frontier wars were the fruit of this great conspiracy—those of 1863 and 1868. The former especially taxed all the power of the Government of the North-West Provinces, and was not brought to a successful conclusion till dissension among the tribes had come to aid the British arms.

The English Government at last became aware of the great conspiracy that had spread through its dominions. Some of the leading conspirators were brought to trial, and paid for their loyalty to the caliphs, or their disloyalty to the Government, with their lives. The Mussulmans became alarmed as well as weary of the continual exactions that were made on them. They therefore sent to the three chief Mohammedan colleges, asking for an opinion as to whether their faith required them to rebel against the Government,—the Government not being Mussulman, but Mussulmans having freedom to carry out their religion in everything except some details, such as not being allowed to put to death a Mohammedan who had changed his religion. The three colleges all pronounced against

rebellion, and counselled submission. Since then the Government has had no trouble with Mohammedan intrigues. Such is the external history of Mohammedanism in India.

Turning to the internal history, the first inquiry is, what influence it has had on Hinduism? The answer is, that while several small sects have arisen, at which we shall look presently, the effect produced on Hinduism generally has been nothing, and the social effects have been decidedly bad. The conquest of India by the Mussulmans was a political conquest: the Hindus became subject to them, and the political advantages connected with it led many to embrace their faith; but it did not produce any modification in the faith of the great multitude who remained Hindu, it rather stiffened them in it. While war and conquest were raging about it, Hinduism was steadily developing itself.

“The East bowed down before the blast
In patient, deep disdain;
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again.”

The only difference we can now trace is that the theory and system of Boppa Deva,¹ which before the Mohammedan conquest was accepted only by the Brahmans, has now pervaded nearly every caste of the Hindus. Take any of the points of difference between Mohammedanism and Hinduism, and it will be found that in them Hinduism is stronger and more intolerant than it was before its rival

¹ See p. 117.

appeared in India. Image worship is as general and as devoutly believed in, and caste as tyrannical, while the pantheistic principles on which they are justified are much more generally diffused. The doctrine of a Supreme God above and beyond Vishnu, Siva, and the other gods, which some have looked on as the effect of Mohammedanism, is really an inheritance from early Hinduism, and even the theistic protest against it was anterior to the Mohammedan conquest.

In some respects the result of the contact with the foreign faith has been only evil. The Hindu women have not now the same freedom and respect that their ancient books show they once had; and this change the Hindus attribute to the need of protecting them from the violence and licence of their conquerors. An indirect effect of this has been an increase of those secret sects which are the greatest stain on modern Hinduism.

But it is Mohammedanism that has suffered most from the contact of the two. It has now degenerated in most of its adherents in India to be little more than a caste outside the pale of Hinduism. They have their caste rules as strong as their Hindu brethren. Their priests repeat the verses of the Koran as the Brahmans repeat the verses of the Veda, with as little idea of their meaning. The worship of Allah is very much superseded by the worship paid to the saints: offerings are brought to their tombs, and gifts given to the priests who officiate in the mosques erected to their honour. Their religion is known in India as *pir parasti*—

saint worship; while that of the Hindus is *but parasti*—image worship; and this, for the majority of both creeds, is the practical difference. Even in this they are not exclusive: the Hindus join cordially in the festivals in honour of the greater Mohammedan saints, and in some cases Mohammedans join in those of Hindu idols. This mutual toleration does not imply any deterioration on the part of Hinduism, for its principles admit every religion as a way of salvation; but it does imply falling away in Mohammedanism, which maintains that it alone is the true faith. In forcing it to accept this position, Hinduism has undoubtedly gained the victory.

One important movement has lately taken place among the Indian Mussulmans: a number of them have shown a desire to acquire European culture, and to minimise the differences between them and the Christians. The leader in this has been Sir Sayad Ahmad Khan; and to promote it he has founded the Aligarh Institute. They are seeking to gain power now by serving the English Government rather than opposing it, and are becoming the most loyal of our Indian fellow-subjects. What the future of Mohammedanism will be under these new conditions it would be hazardous to predict; but it is clear that the opportunity for it becoming the religion of India has passed away. Hinduism has vanquished it by the sheer force of inertia.

While Hinduism generally has not been modified

by Mohammedanism, some reforming movements have markedly experienced its influence. These are generally termed **Panths**, which means paths, and when applied to religion means sects, or, more properly, orders. The rise of these panths is the most marked result of the contact of Mohammedanism with Hinduism.

The first of these is the **Kabīr Panth**, or order of Kabir, who lived about the beginning of the sixteenth century. He was a weaver, and apparently of Mussulman origin; but he early became a disciple of Ramananda, and as such would be considered a Vaishnava. He was a man of no education; he does not seem to have written anything; but his teaching, communicated mostly in verse, was written down by his disciples. He did not study the theology either of Mohammedanism or of Hinduism, but he learned the main principles of these religions by discussion with their teachers. He fused them in a system of his own, in which book revelation was set at naught, and the inner light taken as the supreme arbiter. His system, in its leading features regarding God, the human soul, transmigration, and liberation, it is impossible to distinguish from Hindu pantheism; though he has been called a Unitarian Theist. He denounced caste, denounced the idea of a mediator; used Mohammedan as well as Hindu names for God, and assimilated Mohammedan, and even Christian, ideas as well as Hindu ones. His chief power seems to have been his popular gifts. "He was emphatically a man of the people; and one of the

first to bring down a form of mystical theism to the level of popular comprehension, from the lofty platform of the schools." After his death both Mussulmans and Hindus claimed his body; and the tradition goes that, as they were disputing, a voice bade them look for the body, when it was found that it had disappeared, and a number of white flowers were in its place. Now, however, his followers are generally looked on as Hindus. As far as I have observed, they are to be found in various Hindu castes, and still observe their caste rules.

Kabir is said to have had twelve disciples, who founded twelve separate *panths*. These have now mostly the position of orders rather than castes of Hinduism. A different position has been taken by one of these twelve, **Nānak**, who became the founder of the **Sikh** religion.

The word *sikh* means disciple. Nanak was the *guru* or teacher; his followers were *sikhs* or disciples. He flourished like Kabir about the beginning of the sixteenth century. His teaching is founded on his master's, but is even more pantheistic, and, except in the denunciation of idolatry, not very different from ordinary Vaishnavism. He, too, tried to unite Hindus and Mohammedans in one faith, though the sect he founded became the most bitter foe of the latter. His writings were gathered in a book called the **Granth**, which is more a collection of sayings—largely those of Kabir—than anything original. He died in 1538, and nine other gurus in succession followed him,

under whom the Sikhs became more organised, and began to aspire to political power. The tenth, **Govind Singh**, sought to found an independent kingdom. He abolished all caste distinctions among his followers, required them to obey him implicitly, as their great guru, and under him the subordinate gurus; to be a nation of warriors, to wage constant warfare with the Mussulmans, and never to turn their back on the foe. The result was a series of internecine wars between the Mussulmans and Sikhs. After the break up of the Mogul empire, the Sikhs, under Ranjit Singh, became masters of the Panjab. After his death they became engaged in a war with the British power, which resulted in the annexation of the Panjab, and the suppression of Sikh nationality. Under wise government they have become loyal subjects, and the regiments raised from them are among the bravest and the most trustworthy of the native army.

Govind Singh at his death did not appoint any guru to succeed him, but told them to look to the *Granth*, to which he had added a supplement, as their guru. This has led to what is the most marked feature of the Sikh religion—Bibliolatry. *Sri Granth*, the honourable Book, is the object of worship in all Sikh temples. It is dressed in expensive cloth, laid carefully in its bed at night, like one of the Hindu idols, and when brought out, receives divine worship before it is read. Next to the *Granth* the *Guru* or master is honoured, and he has great power over his disciples. In

doctrine they are not very different from the Vaishnavas; in morality, except in soldierly virtues, they are said to be even below the average Hindus. They are divided into twelve sects, some of which are relapsing into image worship, and in process of time it is not unlikely that they will all take their place in the ranks of all-absorbing Hinduism.

Meanwhile Sikhism may fairly claim to be a distinct religion; and it is remarkable as being the only eclectic creed which has ever become the religion of a large body of disciples, and welded them into a nation. Even it proves the rule. It is not its eclectic creed which gives Sikhism its power over its followers, but the sectarian and patriotic dogmas inculcated by Govind. These gave it power so long as the power of fighting and of conquest remained. But now that it is lost, and it has only its eclecticism and bibliolatriy to fall back on, it seems to have lost its expansiveness, and is increasing only with the increase of the population.

This may be noticed, in conclusion, that all attempts at compromise between Hinduism and Mohammedanism have ended by their followers becoming practically Hindus.

CHAPTER XI

CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

HINDUISM has thus triumphed over the assaults of two of the great aggressive religions of the world, that of Buddha and that of Mohammed; the conflict has now begun with the third, that of Christ. The present, however, is not the first struggle of that conflict: two have already taken place. Primitive Christianity and Roman Catholic Christianity have both assayed the conquest of India. Only since last century has Protestant Christianity fairly girded itself for the task.

There are traditions of the gospel having been preached in India in the first centuries of the Christian era. There is one, thoroughly authenticated, of a missionary called Pantænus having been sent thither from Alexandria during the period of missionary fervour in the Church there, towards the close of the second century. All direct fruit of these labours, if there were any, have entirely disappeared. But there are passages in later Sanscrit and popular Hindi literature which show traces of Christian literature and Christian doctrine. These have now been so as-

simulated by Hinduism as to make it doubly difficult to impress them afresh on the minds of the Hindus.

A later movement has had more permanent results. Some Nestorian Christians, apparently from Persia, seem to have settled chiefly as traders in Southern India, both on the eastern and western coasts. Those on the eastern coast do not seem at any time to have been active; they dwindled and disappeared, surviving just long enough for the Portuguese to serve themselves heirs to their traditions. Those on the Malabar Coast made efforts to evangelise the natives, and soon gathered a large number of converts. But they seem to have entered into alliance with native States, to have come into contact with the Brahmans, and to have been brought to accept the quiescent position which these latter always assign to another faith. They have for centuries settled down alongside of the Hindus on principles of mutual toleration, with the consequent loss of all expansive power.

With the advent of the Portuguese into India came the missionaries of the Church of Rome, chief among whom was the devoted Xavier. They baptized numbers of the natives, but they did not accompany the baptism with effective instruction in religion; indeed, in most cases there seems to have been none at all. The descendants of these converts are now mingled with the descendants of the first Portuguese settlers, and occupy the position of one of the castes of India—Christian but not Hindu. The Hindus attend their saints' festivals, as they often attend the festivals in

honour of the Hindu gods. They have not a high character in India. They are called by the Hindus *Kristān*, a name which has come to have such a bad reputation, that Protestant missionaries are fain to call themselves and their converts *Isāi* or *Massīhi*.

Thus in both of these cases Christianity has been reduced to the same position of passiveness alongside of Hinduism as has Mohammedanism. It has been conquered by the inertia of the native faith.

The entrance of Protestant Christianity into India cannot be dissociated from the conquest of India by a Protestant power. The history of the conquest of India by Great Britain is a romance too well known to make it needful to dwell on it at any length. A company of merchants, incorporated as the East India Company, began trading with India, and establishing factories in various centres. In the troubled state of the country it was obliged to arm its servants to protect its property. From this it was led to form alliances with some of the native princes. This led to its assisting them in war, and this to its conquering and annexing one State after another, till at last the whole of India was subject to its sway. In 1857, consequent on the mutiny of its native army, the government was taken from it and vested in the Crown of Great Britain. The King of England is now Emperor of India, and his Ministers and officers govern it, subject to the review of Parliament.

The relation of the East India Company to the Christian religion passed through three stages. First,

when merely a trading company, it was highly favourable to Christian agents being sent out to the stations which it occupied. Then, when it began to assume a political rôle, and to be responsible for the government of the native population, it absolutely forbade all missionary effort, so that the first English missionaries who went to India had to settle in a part under the Danish Government. The third stage came with the renewal of the Company's charter in 1813, when it was made a condition that there should be perfect freedom in propagating religious belief.

Since then there has been entire religious liberty throughout India. Christianity has been protected from all persecution and oppression, and has been at liberty to develop itself on all legitimate lines. No one need fear that by being or becoming a Christian any violence or persecution towards him will be permitted, nor any oppression, except such as necessarily results from the constitution of society. The Government cannot prevent a caste from dealing with one of its members who becomes a Christian, according to caste law—expelling him from its midst, regarding him as dead, treating him as unclean. But it can and does prevent the caste doing him any personal harm. This attitude is helpful to Christianity in guaranteeing all needful security to it in propagating itself. But there are also some disadvantages even in that. The very absence of those violent persecutions which occur in such lands as China, prevents the display of the higher virtues of loyalty and faithfulness which

they draw forth. The social ostracism which accompanies conversion in India is quite as hard to bear, and has nothing in it to call out the heroic side of the convert, or at all events that which impressively appeals to the public. Then, while Christianity is the religion of the ruling caste,—for so the English are considered,—this rather hinders its acceptance by other castes, with whom religion is the only ground on which they may display their patriotism. Yet, with all these drawbacks, the security of the English rule has given an opportunity for the establishment and development of Christianity among a pagan people, such as the world has not hitherto seen.

Further, the English rule being a Christian one, could not but apply Christian principles, *i.e.* principles of universal righteousness and benevolence, in governing its subjects. Its influence and action could therefore not but be hostile in a great degree to Hinduism. It had to ignore caste in the administration of justice. It had to prohibit *sati*, or widows burning themselves with the dead bodies of their husbands, female infanticide, self-immolation at idolatrous festivals, and other such practices in which Hinduism had entrenched itself. Further, it felt that it could not withhold from its subjects the benefits of education. Now, education is destructive of popular Hinduism. It is so bound up with a false geography, a false astronomy, a false history, that the simple teaching of these sciences tended to destroy in the Hindus all faith in their religion. At the same time, the opening up of the

literature of the West, through the medium of the English language, introduced to India all the unsettling religious and philosophic tendencies to be found there. So that the presence of the English Government in India, seeking to rule righteously, could not but have a great negative influence in destroying faith in Hinduism. It could supply nothing positive in its place. This is supplied through the Christian missions that flourish under its protection.

The work of Protestant missions in India began early in the eighteenth century, with the Danish missionaries Ziegenbalg and Plutsch. England took up the work towards the close of the same century, when Carey, Marshman, and Ward established themselves at Serampore. Since then each decade has seen a fresh development of missionary activity. Nearly all the Churches of Great Britain and Ireland, those of America, and many on the continent of Europe, have missions there; till now we may say that Protestant Christendom has set itself to the conversion of India with a purpose and intensity beyond what it has shown in any previous enterprise. Every agency and every method calculated to commend Christianity to the natives of India has been adopted as soon as it has been seen to be suitable. Evangelistic missions and educational missions, medical missions and industrial missions, and women's missions to women, including all these, and directed to that part of the population which male missionaries cannot reach, have been successively entered on and are now in

full operation. All the missions work in complete harmony. Conferences or councils are periodically held, at which methods of work and results are compared. The last, held in Madras, was attended by representatives of all the Protestant missions, and drew up rules for the guidance of the work, and for the exercise of discipline on a uniform plan, which will give it a place in the history of the Church in India similar to that of one of the great Councils in the early Church.

It is not my purpose to attempt even the briefest history of these missions. I will merely seek to estimate their results: the direct results in the building up of a native Church, and the indirect results in the influence they have exercised on Hinduism.

What, then, have been the results in the past? What definite success has attended Christian missions up to the present time? The total number of native Christians in India at the close of last century was in round numbers three millions, of whom two-thirds were connected with the Nestorian and Roman Catholic Churches, and one-third with the Protestant Churches. We have the means of comparing with previous dates for the whole Christian population only as far back as 1870. These returns show that the whole Christian community has in these thirty years doubled itself, having increased from a million and a half to three millions; and the Protestant community has in the same time increased from 224,000 to 960,000, more than a fourfold increase. Confining

ourselves to the Protestant community alone, we have returns going back half a century. In 1851 the number of native Protestant Christians in India was 91,092, and the number of communicants was 14,661. In 1900 the Christian community had risen to 960,000, including Burma and Ceylon, or in India alone to 828,354, while the communicants in India amounted to 301,699. The Christian community had in the half century increased nine-fold, and the communicants more than twenty-fold. Another way of estimating the relative progress is that in 1851, out of every 10,000 of the population of India only five were Protestant Christians, and in 1900 there were thirty-five. In 1851, out of every hundred Protestant Christians, there were sixteen communicants, and in 1900 there were thirty-seven.

These returns show not only that great progress has been made, but that great relative progress has been made, and progress in the thoroughness of the work. And though, when we consider the vast amount that still remains to be accomplished, it might seem that hardly anything had been done; yet we may say this, that a footing has been secured, preliminary difficulties have been overcome, a vantage ground has been won from which the onward movement may be pressed. And at the same time an impression has been made on Hinduism itself, which shows that its power of resistance is being lessened, and that the Hindus themselves are becoming dissatisfied with it. The evidences of that we shall now consider.

CHAPTER XII

REFORM MOVEMENTS IN HINDUISM

IN looking at the change that is coming over Hinduism, we must remember that Christian missions are only one factor in it. English education and contact with European civilisation are influencing it still more. These are, no doubt, themselves the fruit of Christianity, but they are the fruit without the life that produced them. These influences have produced marked changes in Hindu society, and no one can compare the India of to-day with that of yesterday without feeling that the old order is passing away. The movement is as yet only superficial, and has reached only those centres that are affected by English education. The great mass of the people are not yet stirred by the breath that is blowing on the surface. There is still enough inert Hinduism in nine-tenths of the Hindu community to dominate all the rest, if the disturbing influences were withdrawn. If by some political cataclysm the English rule were overthrown, and no other European rule substituted—if Indian society were left to itself,—there can be little doubt that, after a period of ferment, things would settle down very much as they were before

the advent of the English. The Brahmans would rule the other castes with as despotic a sway as ever; widows would soon be burning themselves on the pyre of their dead husbands; female infanticide, self-immolation, and other abominations of Hinduism would again have full sway. The attitude of the native community on the Age of Consent Bill shows that the spirit of Hinduism is still unbroken, and is ready to assert itself if the controlling power be withdrawn.

But there is little apparent likelihood of the English rule being overthrown, or any of those influences being withdrawn that are steadily telling on Hinduism. We see the process going on in India that went on in Europe in the early ages of Christianity, when the power of the old faiths was overthrown first of all, and their votaries were to be found only in the country, whence they were called "pagans" or "heathen," villagers or countrymen. There is comparatively little change in village life in India, but in the cities there is much mental and religious unrest. The influence of Government education, based as it is on religious neutrality, has been negative rather than positive; destroying faith in Hinduism without substituting anything in its stead. The educated youth, if not atheists at heart, are mostly living without religious sanctions for the morality they are taught; and still perform Hindu rites not from any faith in them, but only as observances required by society. The education in mission schools is, of course, distinctly positive; but it has not yet led many to break with their

old religion. It has rather had the effect of convincing them that the principles of Christianity are largely true, and of making them try to find these principles within their own faith. Some, convinced that Hinduism as it is cannot stand, are seeking for something that may satisfy them better, without compelling them to break with the faith of their fathers.

This was seen in the **Samāj** movement, which was one of the most prominent features of the history of Hinduism during the nineteenth century, and is as distinct a product of the contact of Hinduism with Christianity as the *Panth* movement was of its contact with Mohammedanism. The word Samaj means assembly or church. Like the word church, it may mean either the society that meets in one town or building, or the larger society composed of the local societies collectively.

The movement started with the well-known **Ram Mohun Roy**, who began teaching and writing in Calcutta about the beginning of the century. By his publication of the *Precepts of Jesus* he showed one source whence he derived his inspiration. He selected also from what is good in the Hindu Scriptures, especially the Vedas. The ground he took was that of opposition not to Brahmanism, but to its perversions, and he claimed to be leading his countrymen back to their primitive faith. He came to England on a visit at the close of 1830, and died at Bristol in the year 1833.

The **Brahma Samāj** was founded in 1830 by

him and others who had imbibed his opinions, as an attempt to supply theistic worship, without being dependent on foreign teaching or influence. About ten years later Babu **Debendra Nāth Tagore** became one of its leaders; and under him it made considerable progress towards separation from orthodox Hinduism; but he could not break off from it altogether. This step was taken by Babu **Keshub Chunder Sen**, who joined the Samaj in 1858, when only twenty years of age, and soon became a leader. He was much more progressive than his colleagues, and in 1865 brought matters to a crisis by demanding that the external signs of caste distinction should no longer be used. When this was refused by the majority, he and some of the younger Brahmists left, and founded the **Progressive Samāj**, while the others remained as the **Ādi** or original Samaj. The avowed object of these latter was to make the new religion a fulfilment of the old, instead of an abrogation of it. They tried to found a system of Deism on a system of pantheistic idolatry. They recognised no texts but those of the Hindu Shastras. They taught that there was only one personal God, but denominated him by the formula of Vedantic pantheism "one without a second." They denounced idolatry, but allowed it in certain circumstances. The natural result followed: the system, exposed to the assaults of Christianity and of progressive Brahminism, fell back on its original source, and soon became scarce distinguishable from orthodox Hinduism. One of its leaders, Narāyan Bose, maintained the superi-

ority of Hinduism to Christianity, because it maintained inferior stages of belief in its own bosom,—these inferior stages including the worship of Krishna and of the linga, the sensuality of the Maharajas,¹ and the self-torture of the jogis. When challenged for admitting the Tantras as sacred books, he defended himself on the ground that though they contained many indecent passages, yet they contained some of the sublimest passages of morality and religion; though some passages enjoined excessive drinking and unlawful intercourse, others deprecated them in the strongest terms. Thus Adi Brahmism fulfilled its design of fulfilling the old religion, by falling back into the old slough of Hinduism, and, proving that no fulfilment of the old religion could be a reformation. It is not surprising that its first leader, the earnest Debendra Nāth Tagore, sought refuge from this position by ending his days as an ascetic.

Under the leadership of Chunder Sen the Progressive Brahmists broke entirely with Hinduism. He summed up his creed in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. He looked for its enforcement to the revelation contained in the volume of nature and the volume of the human mind; and he selected from the Scriptures of all creeds what seemed best in them for instruction and for worship. His high character, the strong moral tone of his teaching, and his zealous labours for the diffusion of knowledge, pointed him out as one of the likeliest of Indian reformers. His

¹ See p. 123.

tributes to Christ are among the most eloquent that have been paid to Him; and scarcely less striking is his acknowledgment of the debt which India owes to Christian missionaries. His religious position had much affinity with that of Martineau and the more spiritual Unitarians in this country. He was looked on by them as the coming man, who was to win India to a true spiritual religion. His eloquence and high moral purpose won recognition from all classes in England, and secured for the Brahma Samaj an interest that has not been felt for any other reform movement in India.

The snares of success, however, began to hurt him. He became despotic in his management of the Samaj, which roused the resentment of many members, and a division took place in it. The occasion was the marriage of Chunder Sen's daughter to the Rajah of Kach Bahar. One of the greatest curses of Hindu society, one of those most strenuously denounced by the Brahma Samaj, is the custom of infant marriages; and they had fixed fourteen as the lowest age at which a Brahma girl could be married. Chunder Sen's daughter was not yet that age when her marriage took place. It was pleaded in excuse that the ceremony was little more than a formal betrothal, and that the Brahma leader did not break the spirit, if he did break the letter of the rules he had laid down. But he met the remonstrances that were addressed to him in the despotic spirit that had become habitual to him, and pleaded what could only be a divine revelation. Had this been directing him to per-

form some act of self-denial, it might have been accepted; but seeing it was directing him to do what was for his own advantage, and what he had forbidden to others, it is not surprising that it should have provoked many of his followers. They withdrew, and formed in 1878 a separate society under the name of the **Sadhārana** (General) Brahma Samaj. They had a separate place of worship, and aimed at being more democratic, but in other respects remained the same. Chunder Sen tried to galvanise his section into fresh life by a fresh infusion of Christian ideas and phrases. He spoke of his movement as the New Dispensation; spoke of the influence of the Holy Spirit; instituted a sacrament of rice and water. He died in 1885 with the schism unhealed.

There are thus three sections of the Brahma Samaj. This would not hinder but rather foster its development, if it had an adequate religious basis on which to work. But this it has not. It is an eclectic religion: and it has become the latest evidence that no eclectic religion can ever influence large numbers of men. Such systems must always fail in the authority and also in the logic of religion which are necessary to secure such an end. In the Brahma Samaj, the ultimate authority is each man's own experience and conviction. Their system, such as it is, is contradictory. Its basis is the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. These are Christian dogmas, and Christianity logically carries out the dogma of the Fatherhood in that of the forgiveness of sins. This

Brahmism denies, teaching that "every sinner must suffer the consequences of his own sins, either in this world or the next." Thus it teaches that God is a Father, without the power of forgiving His children. It is reduced to a bare Deism. "There is something in Pantheism so deep that naught in bare Deism can meet it. Deism is not so deep. And Pantheism may well keep the house till a stronger than Deism comes to take possession of it. In Jesus Christ I find the only true solution of the mystery."¹ These words of one of our deepest thinkers have found practical illustration in the history of the Brahma Samaj. It won many converts from the educated classes, but it failed to retain them. At one time branches were found over all Northern India, but it is now confined to Calcutta and its vicinity, and at the close of the century, after seventy years of existence, numbered only 4050 adherents.

A similar movement found expression in Bombay in the **Prārthnā Samāj** (Prayer Samaj). It was the result of a missionary visit of Babu Chunder Sen in 1864. A little company of like-minded men gathered and formed themselves into a society meeting primarily for prayer. In 1867 they openly organised themselves with the above name. They have much the same creed as the Brahma Samaj, but they have broken less decidedly with orthodox Hinduism, and are willing to go through forms of acquiescence in heathen ceremonies which they despise. This is not the spirit in which a

¹ Rabbi Duncan, *Horæ Peripateticæ*.

reform can be accomplished. They are exposed to the ridicule and insult of those very men whom they seek to propitiate, and number now only about 130. This movement, like the Brahma Samaj, may, in considering the religious position of India, be regarded as almost a negligible quantity.

A movement of an entirely different character is embodied in the **Ārya Samāj**. It originated with a Guzerati Brahman, known in after life as **Dayānand Saraswati**, born about the year 1825. He was early taught Sanscrit, and when fourteen years of age had learned the Sanhita of the Yajur Veda by heart. At the same age he lost his faith in idols. His father was a Saiva, and initiated him into the worship of Siva. As part of the initiation, he had to keep fast and vigil for a whole night in one of the temples of that god. By the third watch his father and attendants had fallen asleep, and he, left alone, began to meditate. He asked himself whether the hideous idol which he saw before him, and which allowed mice to run over his body, could be the infinite Deity. He roused his father, and asked him to solve his difficulty; and received the ordinary vindication of idol worship without being satisfied. His faith in the idol was gone; he felt no interest in continuing his vigil, but took some food he had brought with him and fell asleep. On returning home, all he could do was to conceal from his parents his lack of faith, and devote himself to study.

Some time after this the deaths of a beloved

sister and of a revered uncle awoke in his mind the old problem that Buddha had tried to solve—how to alleviate human misery and attain final liberation. He resolved to devote his life to the solution of this, but kept his purpose to himself. When he was twenty-one years of age, he found that his parents were arranging for his marriage. This would have been fatal to the plan of life he had resolved on; so he left his father's house, and successfully eluded all attempts to bring him back. For some time he went about among the various guilds of recluses and colleges of pundits, learning the Vedic philosophy. From one of his teachers, "I learned clearly," he says, "that I am God, the soul and God being one." Shortly after, he was admitted to the order of Dāndis, and took the name of Dayanand Saraswati. The following years he spent in performing pilgrimages to the sources of some of the great rivers of India, of which he gives a vivid account in an autobiography which brings his life up to his thirty-first year. After that he began to go about teaching, and gathering disciples.

I saw him when he visited Ajmer in 1866. He was a tall, fine-looking man, with no covering but a saffron loin cloth, and a cloth of the same colour thrown loosely over his body. He impressed me as a man of keen intellect and commanding personality. He had not yet broken with orthodox Hinduism, nor did he seem to doubt his pantheistic creed, though theistic instincts seemed to trouble him and embarrass him in discussion. He

declared that he was in search of truth, and would follow it wherever it was to be found; but he pointed out to me that the word he used was *sat* (reality), not *sach* (veracity). He still believed in caste as laid down in the laws of Manu, but shirked discussing some of the enactments of these laws. In the same way he tried to evade discussing some of the passages in the Saiva Puranas. He was an uncompromising iconoclast, and was quite willing to unite with the Christians to move Government to destroy all the idols in India. He had an unwavering faith in the Vedas, although he knew only the Yajur Veda, and believed he would find in them the authority for those principles which he seemed instinctively to have grasped. He said, "I do not believe there is a single error in any of the Vedas, and if you show me one I will maintain that it is the interpolation of a clever scoundrel." As a consistent pantheist he denied that he ever committed sin.

It was at this time that he first saw the Rig Veda and the Christian Scriptures, both of which he procured for himself. Coming to the study of the latter with the bent his mind had received, it is not surprising that he rejected it. He assailed it both by word and pen in a truculent, unscrupulous manner. His attacks on the character of Jesus show a moral inability to understand Him. He calls on the Christians to turn to the Vedas, and they would at once see the vast superiority of the God of the Vedas. Yet it is evident that in the conception which he ultimately formed of God, he was

influenced much more by the Bible than by the Veda.

His treatment of the Vedas, though quite different, is not less extraordinary. He assumes them to be the source of all truth; but instead of examining them to find what truths they teach, he reads into them his own beliefs, and even the discoveries of modern science. His interpretations are thoroughly rationalistic. He explains the *devas* (gods) to be the learned, and the *asuras* (demons) to be the unlearned. The worship of God "consists in the respect and service of learned and virtuous men, parents, sages, philosophers, preachers, and kings; in fidelity to the marriage contract, and in the devotion of women to their husbands." "The *Yajna* (sacrifice or sacrificial cult) is the entertainment of the learned in proportion to their worth, the business of manufacture, the experiment and application of chemistry, physics, and the arts of peace; the instruction of the people, the purification of the air, the nourishment of vegetables by the employment of the principles of meteorology, called *Agni-hotra* in Sanscrit." Reading this, we cannot but feel that he looked on all the departments of human life and activity as the true worship of God, and the highest sacrifice. It is a pity that he tried to support this position by giving to the Scriptures of his people a meaning which they never had.

In the final summary of his beliefs he maintained the eternally distinct existence of the Supreme Spirit, of human souls, and of matter

He maintained the doctrine of metempsychosis, and denied, consequently, the forgiveness of sins. He denied caste as having no warrant from the Vedas, but he wished to retain the four castes as orders of learning, admission to each to be determined by examinations. He opposed early marriages, demanded compulsory education, and advocated a system of training as radical and as regardless of human nature as Plato's *Republic*.

He tried to get the Brahmans and pundits to adopt his views; but, failing in this, he turned to the common people, and at Bombay in 1875 founded the Arya Samaj. He adopted the word Arya rather than Hindu, considering the former to be the original designation of the people, and the latter a term of reproach given them by their enemies. He moved about India establishing Samajes in various places, attracting numbers of the younger Hindus especially, by his eloquence and enthusiasm, and disputing both with missionaries and pundits. He died in 1883 at Ajmer. His last written words are: "The purpose of my life is the extirpation of evils; the introduction of truth in thought, word, and deed; the preservation of unity in religion; the expulsion of mutual enmity; the extension of friendly intercourse; and the advancement of public happiness by reciprocal subservience of the human family. May the grace of Almighty God, and the consent and co-operation of the learned, soon spread these doctrines all over the world, to facilitate everyone's endeavour in the advancement of virtue, wealth, godly pleasures,

and salvation, so that peace, prosperity, and happiness may ever reign in the world. Amen."

Such was the founder of the Arya Samaj, and his influence is still felt in its organisation and working. It is organised somewhat on the model of a European guild, the local Samajes unite in one great Samaj. All may become members of it who are over eighteen years of age, who accept its principles, and who undertake to subscribe to its funds not less than one per cent. of their income. The articles of their creed are ten in number. The first declares God to be the source of all true knowledge. The second declares Him to be "all truth, all knowledge, all beatitude, boundless, almighty, just, merciful, unbegotten, without a beginning, incomparable, the support and Lord of all, all pervading, omniscient, imperishable, immortal, eternal, holy, and the cause of the universe; worship is due to him alone." The third declares the Vedas to be the books of true knowledge. The fourth requires the members to accept the truth; and the fifth, to be guided by it. The sixth declares the object of the Arya Samaj to be to do good to the world by improving the physical, social, intellectual, moral, and spiritual condition of mankind. The seventh declares love and justice to be the proper guides of conduct towards others. The eighth requires the members to spread knowledge; the ninth, to seek the good of others; and the tenth, in general interests to subject themselves to the good of others, but in their personal interests to retain independence.

These rules, though rather vague, present a high ideal. The most important practically is the sixth. It includes a wide programme, both of living and of a drastic reform of Hindu society,—abstinence from animal food and spirituous liquors, strict attention to cleanliness and to exercise, the abolition of caste and of idolatry, of early marriages and of excessive expenditure on marriages, the promotion of female education, and the remarriage of widows. The claim that the Vedas are the only true revelation, is supported by enumerating the conditions of a true revelation. Some of these are unquestionable; but some are, to say the least, doubtful, as that it should contain the germ of all true science, that it should be communicated as soon as the world comes into existence, and should be in the language which is not spoken in any country on the earth.

It is evident that the Arya Samaj is a movement of quite another kind from the Brahma Samaj. The latter is an attempt to seek out affinities between Hinduism and other religions, to reach the basis that underlies them all, and to present it in a form suited to India. The Arya Samaj, on the other hand, is the outcome of a strong theistic instinct, and of a clear perception of the reforms needed in Hindu society on a mind ignorant of all culture but that of Hinduism, and intensely resolved to find in it the warrant for all his convictions. And it is just this narrowness of outlook and intensity of conviction which gave the Arya Samaj its power. To understand the hold

which it at first took, we must remember the state of affairs that had been produced by English education. The faith of educated natives in the religion of their fathers was undermined. They felt that the constitution of Hindu society was indefensible, and that reform was imperative. Christianity seemed a foreign, and therefore a hostile faith. The Brahma Samaj seemed also something of a foreign movement without adequate sanctions. But the Arya Samaj was a movement from the very centre of Hinduism itself. It presented a view of the original faith of India that seemed to harmonise with all the discoveries of modern science and the ethics of European civilisation. So they rallied to its standard with all the ardour of patriotism. Thus it came to pass that a teacher utterly unacquainted with the English language, and an entire stranger to Western culture, found his most devoted and aggressive followers among those who had been trained in both of these. They brought to support him in his polemic all the weapons furnished by the agnostic and infidel literature of Europe. Their apologetic was based on rational or scientific grounds; the Vedas are brought in only to give religious sanction, and their texts are explained or explained away to suit their position.

For some time they made great progress, and were looked on as the most formidable force with which Christianity had to reckon. But their science was too jejune to stand a prolonged test, and their glosses on the Vedas did not find accept-

ance with their countrymen. Divisions, too, took place among them, the most important being that on the question of animal food. The sin of destroying animal life, and especially of eating animal food, was one of the original tenets of the Samaj. This did not suit the Rajputs, who are flesh-eaters, and who refused to give up their old habit, though in other respects favourable to the Samaj. This produced keen discussions in the Samaj, and resulted in its division into sections, the **Ghāsi** (vegetarian) and the **Mānsi** (flesh-eating) Samaj. This has no doubt interfered with their progress, yet their numbers have increased during the last decade. In 1890, fifteen years after the founding of the Samaj, they numbered about 40,000; at the close of the century they numbered 92,419, being then more than twenty times the number of the Brahmas. Their force as an element hostile to Christianity is already waning; and indeed the position of their founder is too untenable, in a scientific point of view, to be able to withstand the strain of prolonged investigation, to say nothing of its failure to satisfy the religious wants of man. Meanwhile it is doing its part in the disintegration of old Hinduism.

The question naturally arises, how far has this movement and those that have preceded it loosened the hold of Hinduism on the mass of the people? And I do not believe that it can be said that it has gone much beneath the surface. The centres of thought are beginning to be affected, and a certain

influence is spreading among the people. There are some facts which seem to show that Hinduism has still immense vitality. There never was a time, probably, when more fine temples were being built in India, especially in some of the sacred places. This, however, is more an evidence of the security of the British rule, and of the wealth that is being accumulated by natives under it, than of anything else. The number of pilgrims to the sacred places is diminishing, even while the population is increasing.

Caste is also being much modified, but it may be questioned whether it is anything more than superficially so. The rules of intercourse between the various castes are much less strict, and rules of eating and drinking are less rigorously enforced. This, however, does not affect the root idea of caste, preserving the purity of blood by forbidding inter-marriage. It is on this point that the last battle of caste will be fought. And while it is losing power in some of the higher castes, it is gaining power in some of the lower, and is bringing many of the out-castes, aboriginal tribes and others, within the pale of Hinduism.

It is also to be noticed that some of the castes, as castes, are moving in the direction of reform. Thus the Rajputs have come to an agreement to raise the age for the marriage of their daughters, and to limit strictly, in proportion to the income of the father, the money to be spent at marriages. Other castes are following suit. Some castes, too, are forming samajes of their own, seeking to

assimilate the movement, and to derive fresh vitality from it.

Looking at the whole situation, we may say that, while Hinduism as a whole has been little touched, a beginning has been made. The influence of Christian missions and of Western education has begun to shake the confidence of the leaders of thought among the Hindus in the sufficiency of their system; and the confidence of the mass cannot fail ultimately to be shaken in like manner.

CHAPTER XIII

COMPARISON OF CHRISTIANITY AND HINDUISM

WE have seen that at the beginning of the twentieth century the position of Christianity in India is, that though little may seem to have been done, compared with what needs to be done, yet a footing has been secured from which advance may be made; though the great mass of Hinduism seems scarcely touched, yet movements have begun, which, if pressed, may go on till the whole mass is shaken. In the advance that has been made, in the demoralisation of the foe that has begun, there is encouragement to the Christian army to press on to win India for Christ. In doing so we are only carrying out the great Commission of our Lord to make disciples of all the nations, and that is sufficient warrant for us to go on. But it is well also to look at the relations of the two religions that are brought into conflict, and see whether the duty that is resting on us to seek the highest welfare of India does not likewise require us to press on it the acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Here we must notice, first, that there are elements of religion common to both Hinduism and Christi-

anity. The sentiment of dependence on a higher Power and the teaching of conscience exist more or less strongly in all men, leading them to learn the lessons of nature, and prompting a worship in which their sentiments of devotion may find expression. "He left not Himself without a witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."¹ "The Gentiles, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: who show the works of the law written on their hearts."² In the literature of every nation that has produced a literature, we find these sentiments expressed—man giving utterance to those feelings of reverence and awe, of truth and contrition, which show that the image of God within him, though defaced, is not destroyed. Hindu literature is not behind others in this. It contains numbers, not only of stray verses, but even whole hymns, in which a Christian might express his feelings of devotion. All these Christianity gladly welcomes as proofs of the presence of natural religion, but they are not distinctive of Christianity. Hinduism also uses them, but they are not distinctive of Hinduism. They are cries of the human conscience, expressive of the religious wants which all men feel. The distinctive character of any religion, its practical value in teaching men to live, is seen in the response which it gives to these cries, in the satisfaction which it offers to these wants.

How are we to know what is distinctive in

¹ Acts xiv. 17.

² Rom. ii. 14, 15.

Christianity? What is the message for the world which it alone proclaims, and which no other religion proclaims? To learn this we must go to the words of the Founder of Christianity, to Jesus Christ Himself; and we must notice the message He gave when He sent His disciples forth to all the world. This shuts us off from all the teaching of His earthly ministry. That was confined to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." It is a fact which we must not overlook, that while the religion of Jesus is the most universal that the world has ever seen, the personal ministry of Jesus was the narrowest the world has ever seen. It would take up too much time to show how the one was a necessary preliminary to the other. Meanwhile we need only note that it was not till He had been by His death set free from the limitations of Judaism, and had by His resurrection opened up the way to eternal life for all the world, that He gave the commission to go into all the world. It seems as though He had showed Himself to His disciples after His resurrection only to teach them this new truth. Had He not done so, the old limitation, "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," would have remained. Nothing is more inspiring about the great Commission than the moment at which it was uttered. When the great victory for humanity had been won, the command was given to bear the fruits of that victory to all mankind.

I do not mean to dwell on all that the great Commission teaches us. I wish only to gather from it what was the distinctive message which

our Lord then gave to His disciples, what were the truths which He wished to be taught as His gospel. From the five records which we have of that Commission,¹ we gather the special truths to be, first, that with regard to God, "baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; and second, the message from God to man, "Repentance and remission of sins." These will be found to be the truths distinctive of Christianity to be found in no other religion,² and they are the points on which we may best contrast it with Hinduism.

Let us first, then, compare the conception of God in the two religions. The Hindu conception is, "The one without a second"; the Christian conception is, "**Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**" Of the two it may be said at once that the Hindu conception appears the more rational. It is, in fact, quite within the bounds of human comprehension; it is a creation of human reason, not a revelation of that which is above human reason. The Christian conception of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one that appears at first sight entirely opposed to human reason; but that is because it is a revelation of a truth above human reason, which man with his present powers cannot fully grasp, though by many analogies of creation

¹ Matt. xxviii. 18, 20; Mark xvi. 15; Luke xxiv. 47; John xx. 21; Acts i. 8.

² See article by author in the "Differentia of Christianity" in *Contemporary Review*, April 1898.

he may come to see that it is not really contradictory of reason. I do not mean to argue the question of the Trinity, but simply to look at the practical effect of the two doctrines on religion and life.

The first article in the Christian conception of God is His Fatherhood. We have seen¹ that in the very earliest dawn of Indian history, when the thoughts and the hearts of its people were freshest, a conception of God as Father did exist. But this soon was lost. Men sought their gods in the works of God's hands, and trying to go behind them were lost in a vast impersonal entity. The Hindu conception of the Supreme is that of one vast, impalpable existence, with the attribute of thought and the capacity of joy, but utterly void of all moral qualities, of everything that constitutes righteousness among men; utterly void of the capacity of love or of anything which would give It an interest in anything beyond Itself. The relation of the individual to the Universal is that of a drop of water to the ocean, destined to be lost in it again.² There can be no care on the part of such a Supreme Universal for the individual, no reverence or affection on the part of the latter towards the Supreme—no inducement to do anything more than to seek to lose his personal identity and all connected therewith, good or bad. There could be no conception of a Supreme Deity more calculated to deaden all effort after higher life on the part of man, more fitted to reduce the human spirit to a state of non-entity, than that of Hinduism.

¹ See p. 3.

² See p. 75.

Christianity, on the other hand, conceives of God as our Father in heaven. The relation of a father to his child is the nearest earthly image which God has given of His relation to men. It declares power and authority, care and love, on His part; it demands reverence and obedience, trust and love, on the part of man. It invests man with a dignity which opens up to him the highest eternal possibilities. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when it doth appear, we shall be like Him."¹ It supplies man with the highest motives for striving after perfection: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."² Thus Christianity by the very word Father, places before man an ideal of spiritual attainment and of eternal communion, the highest that religion has ever placed before man.

It is, however, more in connection with the doctrine of the Son, and its counterpart in Hinduism, that the contrast between the two systems is most striking. Here, again, I do not enter into any speculation as to the relations of the persons in the Holy Trinity to one another; the practical question for us is, What does this mean for us? Is it not that in God we have not only Fatherhood, but Brotherhood? The concrete form which this takes is in Jesus Christ, the incarnation of the Son of God, as Son of man and therefore Brother to all the sons of men. He is the full revelation

¹ 1 John iii. 2.

² Matt. v. 48.

of God to man, the Mediator between God and man. This responds to a great want of the human soul. It must have some concrete manifestation of God, which it may comprehend, which it may trust, through which it may approach to God.

The concrete form which this has taken in Hinduism is in the various deities and idols which the Hindus worship. There are the *avatars* or incarnations of Vishnu. Of all of them it may be said that none of them abides. The idea of a God who "became man, and so was and continueth to be God and man," has no place in Hinduism. Each incarnation comes and does some special work, and passes to become incarnate again. Yet the Hindus continue to worship the *avatar* to which they attach themselves, forgetting that he has passed, and may have appeared in another form. The worshippers of Rama worship him as though he still existed as Rama, forgetting that he has appeared since as Krishna. This shows the imperious instinct of the human soul, that demands a mediator who "continueth ever,"¹ which Hinduism fails to supply. Then there are the animals in which Vishnu became incarnate, and which are equally manifestations of him. There are also all the idols with their grotesque or hideous appearance, which are for the people manifestations of God. Still worse is the moral character attributed to them. While in Rama there are moral qualities which we admire, the majority are superhuman only in their lust and cruelty. These are the mani-

¹ Heb. vii. 24.

festations of God which Hinduism supplies,—manifestations whose whole influence is to degrade instead of elevating human nature.

In contrast with all this, Christianity presents Jesus Christ as the one incarnation of the Son of God, the only full and perfect revelation of Him;—the only One in whom the moral attributes of God are revealed in a perfect human life; in whom the power of God is shown in the conquest of death; who abides for ever God and man, the One unfailing Mediator, able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through Him; the only satisfying response to the ineradicable aspirations of the Hindus as of all men.

And as a corollary from this there follows the brotherhood of man. Usually this is stated as a consequence of the Fatherhood of God. But without the link of the Brotherhood of God it has never been stable. Christ's words, "One of the least of these My brethren," are compelling a recognition of the brotherhood of the human race, even more than the words, "Our Father which art in heaven." Physiological and historical arguments, showing the original unity of the race, will have little practical effect in overcoming the prejudices of caste distinctions. But when once Jesus Christ is accepted as our Brother, we must accept along with Him all whom He recognises as brethren, and caste distinctions become impossible.

The Holy Spirit is the embodiment of what we may call the Companionhood of God,—the great

truth that God is with us and in us, giving us power to do His will and to become like Him. As in the Son we see how God may become Son of man, so in the Holy Spirit we see the power through whom men may become sons of God.

The Hindu teaching in which we find the nearest counterpart to this is the doctrine that we are God, and that all we have to do is to realise this. Some sects, chiefly those recently annexed from animistic worship, believe that their holy men do at times become possessed by the divine afflatus. But the teaching of Hinduism proper is that the Universal Spirit is in each man. It is in him, however, as an essence, not as a power; as little capable of delivering from evil as of encouraging in good, incapable even of helping the man to that superiority to good and evil alike, which is considered needful for attaining unity with the indwelling Spirit. Hinduism can conceive nothing of the helping, regenerating power of God. It leaves the most earnest of its votaries to fight out their own dreary battle without any hope of present divine aid, except the distant one that, after ages of intense penance, they may compel some deity to give them release.

Christianity teaches that the Spirit of God is ever present to help man in his struggle after likeness to God. It begets in him the desire to be like God, enables him to realise the work which Jesus Christ has done for him, to obey His teaching and to follow His example. It begets in him a new manhood by a new birth, cherishes the eternal life

thus begotten, till through death it is made perfect in heaven. But for the work of the Holy Spirit in man, the Fatherhood of God and the work of Jesus Christ would remain questions of merely speculative interest; but with the work of the Spirit they become truths of practical power, regenerating man, and fitting him to be a true son of God.

Thus in every point the God of Christianity is a complete contrast to the God, or Supreme Spirit, of Hinduism; as complete a response to the wants and aspirations of man's soul as the other is completely apart from them.

The contrast in the ideas of God enables us to understand the contrast in the ideas of the *summum bonum*, the chief end of man. There is the same word for that in both religions. **Mukti**, the Hindi word, is the word used by the translators of the Bible for salvation. In both religions, too, the idea is so far the same. The exact meaning is deliverance. In Hinduism it means deliverance from all that separates us from being absorbed in the Supreme Being, from good and evil alike, from all personal existence. In Christianity it is being delivered from everything evil, and at last, through death, being delivered from the power of death. The highest statement of the Hindu aim is, absorption in God; of the Christian aim, Life in God. The Hindu aim is one that has no influence on the present life; the Christian aim is one that dominates the present life. Eternal life is not a life that

begins when the present life closes, it is a life which, because it is eternal, exists now, cherishes now the communion with God which is its distinctive mark, and at death is emancipated from all that hinders that perfect communion.

Such is the God whom Christianity presents to India in contrast with the unworthy gods whom it has worshipped; such the aim of religion in contrast with the impotent aim which Hinduism has taught it to seek. Let us now look at the message which Christianity brings to India to teach it how that aim may be attained. It is **Repentance and Remission of Sins**. Repentance is the duty to which it calls India; remission of sins is the gift of God it promises to all who do repent.

Repentance is the duty to which Christianity calls India, as it calls all mankind. What is Repentance? It is turning to God and doing His will. Two things are implied in it: first, recognising the one true God, and His law; and second, worshipping Him alone, and obeying His law alone. Jesus Christ gave repentance as a message to the nations, not merely to the Jews. Had it been the latter, it might have been considered to mean returning to God as revealed in Sinai, and to the law as given to Moses. But it was a message for all nations. Therefore it meant returning to a God who had been revealed to all, to a law that was known to all,—a God, then, who has been revealed to India, a law that is known to the Hindus. And the true God has been revealed to them in the

works of His creation; His law has been written on their hearts. From Him they have turned to worship the idols of the land; from His law they have turned to obey the law of caste. Now the perfect revelation of God and of His law has come to them in Christ Jesus, and the command is given them to repent; to worship God as revealed in Christ, to obey His law as embodied in Christ. That is just calling them to worship the God who made them, and to obey the law written on their consciences. Hinduism forbids repentance; it requires instead obedience to the law of caste. It is not difficult to get Hindus to acknowledge that there is only one true God, and that holiness, truthfulness, and purity are the best service of Him; but holding all that, they still continue to worship the gods of their caste, however worthless they may be, and to follow the customs of their caste, however degrading they may be. They will allow that Jesus is perfectly pure and holy, a true revelation of a holy God, and that Krishna is stained by every vice. But they still continue to worship Krishna, if he is the caste god. And their philosophy supplies a basis to justify their conduct. They say a drop of water may find its way into the ocean in a muddy stream as well as in a pure stream. The whole tendency of Hinduism is towards this flabby tolerance. They allow Christianity to be true: they complain of the intolerance of Christians, who refuse to allow that Hinduism may be true also. But the call to repentance allows of no compromise, of no toler-

ance of anything evil. It requires the Hindus to be true to their own conscience, true to what their conscience witnesses to them with regard to God. When they do that, they will find that they are not far from Christ.

There is a more subtle danger in the present state of education and thought in India. Many educated Hindus are convinced of the truth of Christianity and of the divinity of Jesus Christ. They openly state their belief, and declare that they try to order their lives by His precepts; but they are not willing to break with their caste people, and to endure all that that would mean. For people in that position all sympathy must be felt, but their action is not repentance. It is not the turning to God, and to that endeavour after perfectly doing His will which the gospel message requires. Whatever Christian missionaries may think unnecessary to press, they must never cease to preach repentance, and to require the Hindus to repent, to turn from all the evils of their system to faith in the one true God, and obedience to His law.

Forgiveness of Sins is the other side of the message of Christianity to India. Here it is in complete antagonism to Hinduism. The need of repentance a Hindu will theoretically acknowledge; the possibility of forgiveness of sins he will deny. Even the Brahma Samaj, which has approached more nearly to Christianity than any other offshoot of Hinduism, cannot accept this doctrine, but maintains that every sinner must suffer full penalty

for every sin which he commits, either in this world or in the next. It is this doctrine of retribution which prevents the call to repentance having any power; and this will become clear if we consider how it works out.

It is remarkable that both Hinduism and Christianity solve the problem of atonement for sin by substitution or by vicarious suffering. In Hinduism the substitution takes place according to the law of retribution; in Christianity, according to the law of forgiveness. How do the Hindus conceive that the sins of this life are to be atoned for? By sufferings in a future state of existence. But in this future state, they teach, we shall have no memory, no consciousness of our present state; just as in our present state of existence we are paying the penalties or reaping the rewards of a previous state of which we have no recollection. That division of consciousness makes each man practically another person from him whose penalties he is now suffering, and also from him who will have to suffer the penalty for his present misdeeds. Thus the principle that everyone must suffer for his own misdeeds is forced by the facts of consciousness to the conclusion that another must suffer for them. And it is obvious how this tells on repentance. If such vicarious retribution does take place, then we are helpless. Having now to suffer for another person, supposed to be ourselves in a former birth of which we have no consciousness, there is no use trying to escape it. As little use is there in trying to avoid misdeeds, the retribution for which will

fall on another, even though that other be ourselves in another consciousness. This shows how closely Repentance and Forgiveness of sins are bound together. If there be no Forgiveness of sins, there can be no adequate motive for Repentance.

But Christianity does bring to India the message of Forgiveness. In contrasting the hymns of the Vedas with the psalms of the Old Testament, we saw that while in both there was the desire for forgiveness expressed, it was only in the latter that the consciousness of forgiveness was found. We have seen how the need for forgiveness apart from its assurance worked out in India. In Israel it worked out in the mission of Jesus Christ the accomplishment and the seal of God's forgiveness. Here we come to the New Testament doctrine of atonement through substitution. It is the outcome of the law of forgiveness, and forgiveness has its laws as truly as retribution. That law is nowhere formally laid down, but we can quite well understand it by the analogies which God's Word supplies. Our Lord has taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." There we have brought before us the evidence and the method of the divine forgiveness. Why do we believe that God will forgive us? Just because we can forgive others. God has the same power, the same prerogative of forgiveness that we have, only in an infinite degree. How will God forgive us? Just as we forgive our debtors; there is no other method for Him than that which He has taught us. And how do we forgive our debtors? Just by bearing

the loss of the debt ourselves. There is no other way. When a man forgives a debtor, he consents to give up all that that debt was to him; he bears all the consequences of losing it. Our Lord, by using the word debts instead of trespasses, enables us to see how completely what we forgive must be the measure of its cost to us, and therefore how truly what God forgives us must be the measure of its cost to Him. Forgiveness is self-substitution. And when we pray God to forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors, we ask Him to bear the burden of our sins, as we bear the loss of the debt we forgive; to substitute Himself for us, as we substitute ourselves for the debtors we forgive. Only those who deny that God is our Father in heaven can consistently deny that He can forgive our sins; only those who deny that He can forgive us, as we forgive our debtors, can consistently deny vicarious atonement for sin.

It is in the cross of Calvary that we see what our sin has cost God. We see there the sufferings of Jesus Christ; and the teaching of the gospel is that He has borne our sins. But we must remember that He is the revelation of God. He is one with the Father in forgiving our sins; He is one with the Father in bearing our sins. And His death on Calvary is the revelation alike of what man's sin means, and of how entirely God has fulfilled man's prayer, "Forgive us our debts."

With the proclamation of forgiveness, the call to repentance has a new meaning and a new power. It assures us of deliverance from the consequences

of past transgressions, if we seek to obey in the future. It presents us with a view of what our transgressions cost God in forgiving us; that is the strongest motive to shun them. It shows that every fresh transgression is a fresh addition to the burden He has to bear, a fresh wound to the love that has sacrificed so much for us. Hence the message of forgiveness is the strongest call to repentance, and often awakens the conscience when nothing else can. It softens the heart and renews the will; while the Hindu message of inevitable retribution, through an endless series of existences, hardens the heart and paralyses the will.

Repentance and Remission of sins is still the message which the Church has to press on India, with the assurance that that is the only message which can renovate India, and enable it to attain its highest position, a jewel in the Redeemer's crown. It may seem vain to hope that the Hindus can ever be delivered from that all-embracing idolatry to which they are bound by the most tyrannous of social systems and the most subtle of philosophies. But there are two principles of human nature which are our allies in this warfare, and give us confidence that the successes already won, though comparatively small, will be continued till Christianity is everywhere triumphant. These are **Consciousness** and **Conscience**. Consciousness refuses to accept the fiction of endless births in the past, of which our present existence is the latest outcome; and so refuses to believe in an endless

series of births in the future to atone for what we now are. Conscience refuses to accept the morality which teaches that every sin becomes venial if sanctioned by caste custom; that every benevolent and virtuous act, if not sanctioned by caste custom, is a sin. Consciousness bears witness that we are not part of God. Conscience bears witness that a God who delights in iniquity, or who at most is indifferent to good and evil, is no God at all. Though ages of false faith, false worship, false custom, may have so stifled these principles among the Hindus as to make them seem almost non-existent, they are still there, latent if not active, and need only to be fully aroused to secure the overthrow of the system that has enslaved them. And let us remember, too, that besides these principles of human nature we have divine power to aid us. Behind the message of forgiveness we have the work of Jesus Christ; behind the call to repentance we have the power of the Holy Ghost. In such strength the Church may go forward with all assurance to win India for Christ.

APPENDIX

SCHOOLS OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY

THERE are six **Darshan** (views or schools) of Hindu Philosophy.

1. The **Nyāya**, or Logic, founded by **Gautama**. He taught the method of reasoning adopted by all the schools, whence the name. He considered sensation to be the origin of our knowledge; and explained what could not be accounted for otherwise by **Adrishta**—the unseen.

2. The Atomic school, founded by **Kanada**, is connected with the above, supplementing it by investigating the objects of sensation, and introducing the idea of atoms as the material cause of the universe.

3. The **Sāṅkhya**, or numerical system, founded by **Kapila**, is materialistic. It starts with the object of our sensations—matter, and teaches its eternity. God could not create the universe without desire and consequent want of power:—if He had power He could not have desire, and if He had desire He could not have power. According to it, **prakriti**, the cosmic element, the rootless root, is the eternal cause of all things, and contains within itself the “promise and potency” of every form

of existence. It is animate, non-sentient, and prolific. Beside it is **purusha**, soul or embodied spirit, intelligent, sentient, and non-productive, because free and indifferent.

4. The **Yoga**, or mystical system, founded by **Patanjali**, adopted the above system partially, but introduced the idea of God, and dwelt on how the soul is to be freed from bondage to *Prakriti*.

5. The **Purva Mimansa**,—original decider,—founded by Jaimini, sought to bring the Brahmans back to the Veda, as the decider, the source of Authority. Its distinctive tenet is the eternity of the Vedas, or the eternity of the Word or sound. (*Sabda.*)

6. The **Uttara Mimansa**,—second decider,—founded by **Vyāsa**, appeals also to the Veda, but to its concluding portion, the Upanishads (see p. 27), whence its popular name **Vedānta**. It seeks to answer the question, What is and what is not? The answer is **Brāhmā** (the Supreme Spirit, not *Brahmā*) alone is, everything else is not. One section, acknowledging the reality of the visible universe, identifies it with God; another, the more general, denies its reality, and calls it *maya*, or illusion. This is now the dominant school, and the study of the others is considered incomplete without it.

In addition to these, mention should also be made of the **Bhagavad Gīta**, or divine song, which, though in poetic form, has a wide philosophic authority. It is introduced as an episode into the

Mahabharata (see p. 34), and takes the form of a dialogue between Arjuna, the real hero of the poem, and Krishna, who acts as his charioteer. Arjuna, on going into battle, is struck with horror at the thought of the slaughter that is about to take place, and expresses this to Krishna. Krishna explains to him the philosophy of the position mainly from the *Yoga* point of view, showing how each man is, as the fruit of past deeds, born into a certain sphere, and bound to discharge its duties; how those whom he may slay are thereby helped a stage on towards liberation. Even the Divine Being Himself at appointed times must come to earth to do this work. He reveals himself as such to Arjuna, dispels his doubts, and inspires him to go unflinchingly to battle. For a poetic presentment of philosophy it has few equals; but its practical outcome is the vindication of caste law.

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